

# **SLAVERY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

## **Through the Ages**

**Vol. I**

# **From the Ancient to the Medieval Periods**

**By**

**Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah**

**I. S. R. C.**

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated

Primarily to

*The Almighty Allah*

Most Gracious, Most Merciful

And then to

the seekers and lovers of truth especially among the  
students and research scholars throughout the world.

**BY THE SAME AUTHOR:**

*Hagar the Princess*, 2012 (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2016).

*Israelites Versus Other Nations*, 2012.

**→ Forthcoming Books:**

*Islam as Emancipator of Women*

*New World Order or Kingdom of God on Earth*

*Original Sin and Salvation*

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*Muhammad Ashraf Chheenah,*

Chairman,  
ISRC, Islamabad, 2017.



# ABBREVIATIONS

AD/CE	anno domini (Latin), in the year of the Lord, Common/ Christian Era.
Ar	Arab, Arabia, Arabian, Arabic.
B	Bible.
BC	Before Christ; Bible Commentary; Biblical Commentary.
BCE	Before Christian/Common Era.
c/ca	About, approximately (Latin circa)
CE	Common Era: secular form of AD.
Ch	Chapter.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible.
Ed	Editor, edited by, edition.
Edn	Edition.
e.g./eg	for example (Latin exempli gratia).
Enc	Encyclopedia/Encyclopaedia/Encyclopedic.
Heb	Hebrew.
i.e.	that is, that means, namely.
MT/Mt	Masoretic /Masoretic Text of the OT; Matthew; Mount.
NT	New Testament of the Bible Contains 27 books: 4 Gospels, Acts, Epistles (letters), and lastly Revelations. It was originally written in Greek, whereas Jesus Christ delivered his message in the Aramaic language.
op.cit.	in the work already quoted (Latin opere citato).
OT	Old Testament of the Bible Consists of 39 books: The first five are collectively called the Pentateuch or Torah. It was originally written in Heb.
(pbAh)	peace and blessings of Allah upon him.
p/pp	Page/pages.
P	Priestly tradition of the OT of the Bible.
Pbl/pbg	Publisher(s) Publication(s) /Publishing/.
Rvd	Revised.
St	Saint.
s.v.	Under the word or heading.
Tr.	Translator, translation, translated by.
Uni./Univ.	University.
v/vv	Verse/verses of the Bible.
V	Version (Tr.) of the Bible.
Vol.	Volume.
(...)	It indicates that some word, words, sentence, sentences, line, or lines have been left over from the original quotation.
(....)	It shows that a sizeable text has been omitted from the original quotation.
[ ]	The square brackets are used to insert something by the Tr./Ed., which did not originally exist in the quotation.
AV/KJV	Authorized Version/King James Version.
CCB	The Christian Community Bible (Manila: Divine Word Pbln, 1988).
CEV	Contemporary English Version (NY: American Bible Society, 1995).
GNB/TEV	Good News Bible/ Today's English Version -do-.
GNB:REV	Good News Bible (Revised Edn), Minto: The B. Society in Australia Inc. NSW.

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LB	The Living Bible (Illinois: Tyndale House Pblshrs. 1976)
MT	The Torah, The Mesoretic Text (Jewish Pbln. Society of America).
NAB	New American Bible, Catholic Bible Association, 1991.
NASB	The New American Standard Bible, Cambridge Univ. Press 1977.
NEB	The New English Bible, Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.
NIV	New International Version, London, 1984.
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edn, Bombay: St. Paul's, 1993.
NKJV	New King James Version.
NLTr.	New Living Translation, 1996:
NOAB.	The New Oxf. Annotated B:
NRSV.	New Revised Standard Version:
RSV.	Revised Standard Version.
RBV	Revised Berkeley Version:
Peshitta	The Authorised B. of the Church of the East, 1957.
Knox	Ronald A.Knox, Tr. From the Vulgate, Macmillan & Co. 1957

## Abbreviations of the Books of the Bible

### 1. The Jewish Bible/OT

<b>Abbreviation:</b>	<b>Book:</b>	<b>Abbreviation:</b>	<b>Book:</b>
Amos or Am	Amos	Judg. or Jgs	Judges
1 Chron. or 1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Kings or 1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Chron. or 2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Kings or 2 Kgs	2 Kings
Dan. or Dn	Daniel	Lam. or Lam	Lamentations
Deut. or Dt	Deuteronomy	Lev. or Lv	Leviticus
Eccles. or Eccl	Ecclesiastes	Mal. or Mal	Malachi
Esther or Est	Esther	Mic. or Mi	Micah
Exod. or Ex	Exodus	Nah. or Na	Nahum
Ezek. or Ez	Ezekiel	Neh. or Neh	Nehemiah
Ezra or Ezr	Ezra	Num. or Nm	Numbers
Gen. or Gn	Genesis	Obad. or Ob	Obadiah
Hab. or Hb	Habakkuk	Prov. or Prv	Proverbs
Hag. or Hg	Haggai	Ps. (pl.Pss.) or Ps (pl. Pss)	Psalms
Hosea or Hos	Hosea	Ruth or Ru	Ruth
Isa. or Is	Isaiah	1 Sam. or 1 Sm	1 Samuel
Jer. or Jer	Jeremiah	2 Sam. or 2 Sm	2 Samuel
Job or Jb	Job	Song of Sol. or Sg	Song of Solomon (=Song of Songs)
Joel or Jl	Joel	Zech. or Zec	Zechariah
Jon. or Jon	Jonah	Zeph. or Zep	Zephaniah
Josh. or Jo	Joshua		

### 2. The New Testament

<b>Abbreviation:</b>	<b>Book:</b>	<b>Abbreviation:</b>	<b>Book:</b>
Acts	Acts of the Apostles	Luke or Lk	Luke
Apoc.	Apocalypse (=Revelation)	Mark or Mk	Mark
Col. or Col	Colossians	Matt. or Mt	Matthew
1 Cor. or 1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pet. or 1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Cor. or 2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pet. or 2 Pt	2 Peter
Eph. or Eph	Ephesians	Philem. or Phlm	Philemon
Gal. or Gal	Galatians	Phil. or Phil	Philippians
Heb. or Heb	Hebrews	Rev. or Rv	Revelation (=Apocalypse)
James or Jas	James	Rom. or Rom	Romans
John or Jn	John (Gospel)	1Thess. or 1Thes	1 Thessalonians
1 John or 1 Jn	1 John (Epistle)	2Thess. or 2Thes	2 Thessalonians
2 John or 2 Jn	2 John (Epistle)	1 Tim. or 1 Tm	1 Timothy
3 John or 3 Jn	3 John (Epistle)	2 Tim. or 2 Tm	2 Timothy
Jude	Jude	Titus or Ti	Titus



## PREFACE

Many religions including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity contain references to human rights concisely or in some detail. Similarly, human rights had been the central point in thousands of books written in different languages throughout the world. Philosophers, wise men and scholars as well as historians had also been **discussing human rights without defining a human being to differentiate him from other creatures in the animal world**. We, therefore, observe that all such discussions on human rights are futile unless and until human beings reach a consensus to determine essential features of a human being to differentiate him from animals and other creatures of the Lord. Similarly, most of the sources mentioned above fail to disclose the **purpose of human creation, their death and the final abode after their resurrection**. It is only from the Qur'ān and the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) that we receive the true information about the Almighty the Creator, the purpose of creation, and the essential features of humankind differentiating them from all other species created by the Lord. The Qur'ān and Ahadith are also unique to explain the possible fate of men in the sepulcher and the events after the resurrection leading to judgment by the Almighty.

As regards the purpose of creation, the Almighty has clearly revealed that:

I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.<sup>1</sup>

Humankind must, therefore, remember the foremost purpose of their creation. Worship (service) of the Lord means living by the law of the Lord. Those who refuse to worship the Lord and behave arrogantly by disobeying His commandments are sure to be punished severely on

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Qur'ān 51:56 Yusuf Ali.

the Day of Judgment. The true worshipers of the Lord, however, will be felicitated by Him and admitted into the house of eternal happiness, peace and blessings of the Almighty.

We learn from the Qur'ān that all the creatures in the universe are obliged to worship the Almighty under compulsion of the Lord except humankind and Jinn, the only species granted freedom of thinking and freewill to act in accordance with their own choice. This was done with the purpose of their test and trial on earth. God said:

**1. Blessed be He In whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power; 2. He who created death and life, that He may try which of you is best In deed:** and He is the Exalted In Might, Oft-Forgiving.<sup>2</sup>

These verses affirm two important points:

- a.** That the Almighty holds control over life and death besides sustaining and evolving everything else in the universe.
- b.** That He created death and life only to **test and try Jinn and human** beings to ascertain which among them turn out to be best in their deeds as against those who transgress the commandments of the Almighty. Each individual has been given a time of trial on earth after which he is destined to die and to be resurrected on the Day of Judgment to account for his good or bad deeds during his life on earth. The Almighty would judge and recompense everyone in accordance with his performance.

The Qur'ān has also revealed that the Almighty had created Adam with the predestination to serve as vicegerent of the Lord on earth (Al-Qur'ān 2:30). His primary duty was, therefore, to worship the Lord Himself and to preach worship as well as obedience to all the commandments of the Lord to his descendants. To dignify His vicegerent on earth, the Almighty conferred special honors and favors on humankind. God said:

And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur'ān 67:1-2 Yusuf Ali.

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heavens and on earth: Behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect.<sup>3</sup>

## Essential Features of Human Beings:

The Qur'ān also has thrown light on essential features of a human being at various places in the scripture. Some of the important features are described in the following.

### 1. Universal Brotherhood of Humankind and Equality of Rights among them

God said:

O mankind! we created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and Tribes, that ye may know Each other (Not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the Most honoured of you **In the sight of Allah is (He who is) the Most righteous of you.** and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).<sup>4</sup>

The creation of man from a single pair of male and female i.e. Adam and Eve, therefore, establishes universal brotherhood of humankind and equality of rights among them. The differentiations such as nations or tribes etc. are meant only for identification of different individuals from each other. Races, tribes, nations and birthrights, therefore, do not confer any permanent superiority of one individual or a race over the others. All are descendants of Adam and Eve and in the sight of Allah, only those people are more honorable than others who do good deeds under **fear of their accountability before the Lord.** God's judgment will be impartial and absolutely just because He has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things. Nothing can remain hidden from the sight of the Lord.

The words of God quoted above (Al-Qur'ān 49:13), however, emphasize the fact that all descendants of Adam and Eve are whether black or white, red or yellow, from North, South, West or East, belonging to any nation or speaking any language whatsoever are fully human beings enjoying parity of rights and privileges

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<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Qur'ān* 45:13, tr. Yusuf Ali.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Qur'ān 49:13 Yusuf Ali.

with each other. **They all are citizens of the Earth.** God loves all His creatures and human beings have no right to kill, oppress, to enslave or assign lower ranks to the poor and the weaker people in the world. Their equality has also been affirmed in the following Hadith:

All people are equal, as equal as the teeth of a comb. There is no claim of merit of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a white over a black person, or of a male over a female. Only God-fearing people merit a preference with God.<sup>5</sup>

During the Farewell Hajj, the Holy Prophet had proclaimed that:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action.<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said to an (arab) companion: "**You are not better than people (of other races) unless you excel them in piety.**"<sup>7</sup>

It is abundantly clear from the above that the Almighty and the Holy Prophet (pbAh) declared all the descendants of Adam and Eve as fully humans. No one excels others on the basis of a race or birth right. Disparities on the basis of power, knowledge, wealth and color started with people's denial of the guidance from the Almighty. The partition of human beings into nations, races and tribes, therefore, destroyed the concept of universal brotherhood and equality of rights as well as opportunities among them. All tragedies emanate from the assertions of certain people that they are better than others. The first person in the entire universe to declare that '**I'm better than he**' was Satan and only the followers of Satan persist on their superiority over others.

Peaceful co-existence of humankind on earth can only be ensured by accepting the principle of universal brotherhood of mankind. This needs acceptance of all

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Musnad*, Cairo 1930, vol. VI, p. 411, cited by M. Abdul-Rauf in *The Islamic View of Women and the Family*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 7, Ch. 3

<sup>7</sup> *Jame Al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1361.

the descendants of Adam as full human beings enjoying the same rights and privileges as per verdict of the Almighty. It is, therefore, the non-acceptance of the universal brotherhood and equality of rights between them that is creating hell on earth.

Our study of history reveals that the primary causes for human exploitation and miseries had been the excessive power, wealth and division of mankind into various classes based on caste, color, creed, region or language. The pretensions of chosen race, chosen people of God, sons of God or the beloved people of God, therefore, conflict with the greatest reformation in the human rights as per words of God (al-Qur'ān 49:13) and sayings of the holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) quoted above. The verdict of God is "*Verily the Most honoured of you In the sight of Allah is (He who is) the Most righteous of you*". The rectitude as enjoined by the Almighty, therefore, needs channelization of all human instincts and lusts in such manner that they surrender their will to the will of the Almighty. As such, human beings need to live a God conscious life and refrain from everything forbidden by the Lord. They, therefore, cannot transgress the limits prescribed by the Almighty.

People are also misled to see the worldly differences in power or affluence enjoyed by some of them. The God has revealed that these were certain temporary favors to test and try their beneficiaries. God said:

It is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others: **that He may try you in the gifts** He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>8</sup>

Those who show gratitude to the favors of the Lord will entitle themselves to further blessings of the Lord. As against them, the arrogant and proud people will be punished by the Lord on the Day of Judgment. Permanent ranks shall, therefore, be granted in accordance with their deeds:

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<sup>8</sup> Al-Qur'ān 6:165 Yusuf Ali.

To all are degrees (or ranks) according to their deeds: for thy Lord is not unmindful of anything that they do.<sup>9</sup>

And to all are (assigned) degrees according to the deeds which they (have done), and in order that (Allah) may recompense their deeds, and no injustice be done to them.<sup>10</sup>

Discrimination of people on any considerations other than their moral conduct, therefore, has no value before the Lord. The moral behavior of a human being must differentiate him from the beasts of prey, the proud transgressors or other animals of the lowest degrees. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) had, therefore, been trying earnestly to change the brutish and beastly inclinations of his followers into god-conscious, compassionate and law-abiding slaves of the Lord. Such were the people who surrendered themselves to the will of the Lord in all aspects of their lives and especially regarding treatment with the slaves. Consequently, the black slaves and downtrodden people of Africa or other places were treated like the most venerated people in the Muslim society. Enslavement of free people had been strictly prohibited by the Lord. Except for the prisoners of war, no free men could be captured or retained as slaves. For details please refer to our chapters titled '*Moral Revolution through Islam*' and '*War Codes and War Ethics in Islam*' in this Volume. The believers were exhorted to manumit the slaves to please the Lord or to treat them like their own kith and kin. (Sahih Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 46, Hadith Number 721). Here is another Hadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh):

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave." Said bin Marjana said that he narrated that Hadith to 'Ali bin Al-Husain and he freed his slave for whom 'Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him ten thousand Dirhams or one-thousand Dinars.<sup>11</sup>

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) himself manumitted 63 slaves while Ayesha his wife manumitted 67 slaves. Similarly, Abbas released 70 and Abdullah bin Umar 1000 slaves.

<sup>9</sup> ibid 6:132.

<sup>10</sup> ibid 46:19.

<sup>11</sup> *Hadith, Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Number 693:

Abdurrahman bin Auf was perhaps at the top of the list of manumitters by purchasing and manumitting 30000 slaves.<sup>12</sup> Due to the repeated exhortations to set the slaves free, the Muslims have been manumitting slaves in large numbers. The net impact was that by the time of the fourth caliph i.e. Ali, all previous or hereditary slaves had been set free. Such slaves or ex-slaves could lead the Muslims in their prayers and also serve as Emirs of the armies in accordance with their merit. Many of the highest ranking companions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) or the chiefs of the Arabian tribes served under the commandment of the ex-slaves. Bilal son of Ribaha an ex-slave manumitted by Abu Bakr at Makkah used to be addressed as *Sayyidina Bilal* (i.e. our master or leader Bilal) by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph Umar. Similarly, it was to create parity among the Muslims that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) used to mention *Salman* an ex-slave of Persian descent that:

Salman, of course is a member of our family.

A unique example of manumitting the slave and raising him to the highest honors is found in the chapter '*Zaid, Zainab and the Prophet*' in our book *Islam as Emancipator of Women*.

All this leads us to the conclusion that **there can be no end to human exploitation and miseries unless and until all human beings on earth bow before the Law of the Lord and avoid all misconceptions of superiority of rights**, power or richness over the weaker or poor members of the society. Only the universal brotherhood and equality of rights among human being can ensure future survival of man on earth and also his salvation in the Hereafter.

Our chapter on human rights is, therefore, based on the commandment of the Lord (49:13) declaring all human beings as sons of Adam and Eve enjoying equal birthright with others. It is the haughtiness of the

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<sup>12</sup> Maududi, *Tafheemat*, Part IV, (Lahore: Idara Tarjuman-al-Qur'ān Ltd., 1989) p. 15.

powerful and richer nations that they refuse to accept the colored races or the under-developed nations as their brethren or even human beings. The denial of their rights is the natural corollary of the same.

According to Islam each and every baby starts with a zero meter on earth. A king, a priest or an ordinary individual get equal reward for the good deeds done by them. Similarly, no one is exempt from punishment prescribed by the Lord. All will be treated at par and punished in accordance with the crimes committed by them. For further details please refer to the topic 'Equality before Law' in chapter titled '*Moral Revolution through Islam*' in this volume.

The distinctive feature of Islam against other revealed religions is that the Almighty has acknowledged the individuality of each and every son of Adam with equality of basic rights among all human beings. The Lord has, therefore, sanctified the life of each individual in such manner that no one can kill another human being without justification as per law of the Lord.

**Essential value of human life is God-given.** All descendants of Adam enjoy the precious blessings of the Lord because God has breathed His spirit in each and every human being on earth. This leads to the concept of equality of rights, opportunities, dignity and sanctity of life of people. مساواة (**Musawa**) i.e. **equality of rights**, social status and justice was, therefore, the first and the most important reformation in the human rights introduced by Islam.

The human rights in Islam are permanent and unchangeable because the Almighty himself had enjoined the same. Basic human rights were granted neither by any king nor assembly of human beings. Since the creator himself had bestowed these favors on all human beings on earth, therefore, no other authority can withdraw or annul the same. Without acceptance of a common ancestry, full humanity of all descendants of Adam with equality of their rights, our codes of law cannot be called human rights at all. Instead of calling man-made law as human rights, we should better name

them 'will of the majority', 'communal codes', 'rights of citizens', 'privileges of the religious leaders', 'the rights of conquerors' or 'traditions of the old' etc.

We, therefore, conclude that all the descendants of Adam and Eve are included in the human beings. This establishes universal brotherhood of humankind and equality of their rights.

## **2. Teaching to Read, or Speak Intelligently:**

The next special feature of humankind has been revealed by the Lord in the following:

1. ((Allah)) Most Gracious! 2. it is He who has taught the Qur'an. 3. He has created man: 4. **He has taught Him speech (and intelligence).**<sup>13</sup>

1. Proclaim! (or read!) In the name of Thy Lord and Cherisher, who created- 2. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed Blood: 3. Proclaim! And Thy Lord is Most Bountiful,- 4. He who taught (the use of) the pen,- 5. Taught man that which He knew not.<sup>14</sup>

The verses quoted above disclose that besides creating man, teaching him the Qur'ān, the Almighty has taught them to speak intelligently. Hence, the faculty of reading and writing and speaking intelligently are the special blessings of the Lord on man. No other creature had been gifted by the Lord in that manner.

## **3. Writing with Pen and to Learn**

Lord's teaching to write with the pen and to learn which they did not know was the next special feature of humankind. The distinctive feature in these two bounties was that other creatures can neither write with pen nor convey knowledge to others. They have no manner to keep a record of their learning or discoveries. Only the man had been endowed with such precious gifts.

## **4. God Created Man with His Own Hands:**

Both the Bible and the Qur'ān tell us that:

<sup>13</sup> Al-Qur'ān 55:1-4 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Qur'ān 96:1-5 Yusuf Ali.

82. Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is, "Be", and it is!<sup>15</sup>

Human beings enjoy special honour in respect of their creation. Whereas all other things were created with general commandment of the Almighty "be, and it was", the Almighty gave a special form to humankind by creating him with His own hands as revealed in the following:

75. ((Allah)) said: "O Iblis! what prevents Thee from prostrating Thyself to one whom I have created with My hands? Art Thou haughty? or art Thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?"

The creation of man with the own hands of the Almighty was, therefore, a special attribution for him as detailed in the following.

## 5. Creation of Man in the Best of Moulds:

God also said: "we have indeed created man In the best of moulds" (95:4). Although all human beings had been created in the best of moulds yet those who persist in disobeying the Lord arrogantly are retrograded to the lowest among the Low. Such are the people described in the following:

مُّرَدِّدَاتٌ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلَيْنَ

then do we abase Him (to be) the lowest of the low.<sup>16</sup>

Another verse explains the same:

Already have We urged unto hell many of the jinn and humankind, having hearts wherewith they understand not, and having eyes wherewith they see not, and having ears wherewith they hear not. **These are as the cattle - nay, but they are worse! These are the neglectful.**<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, *Ashab-al-Sabt* had been transformed into the despised apes due to their transgressions:

So when they took pride in that which they had been forbidden, We said unto them: Be ye apes despised and loathed!<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Al-Qur'ān 36:82 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Qur'ān 95:5 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Qur'ān 7:179 Pikthal.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Qur'ān 7:166 Pikthal.

Punishment to transgressors has also been defined in the following:

Say: "Shall I point out to you something much worse than this, (as judged) by the treatment it received from Allah? those who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath, those of whom some **He transformed into apes and swine**, those who worshipped evil;- these are (many times) worse in rank, and far more astray from the even path!"<sup>19</sup>

The Lord further revealed that:

O ye People of the Book! believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you, before We change the face and fame of some (of you) beyond all recognition, and turn them hind wards, or curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers, for the decision of Allah Must be carried out.<sup>20</sup>

The Fire will burn their faces, and they will therein grin, with their lips displaced.<sup>21</sup>

Since humankind were created with the purpose of their test and trial on earth, those who disobeyed the commandments of the Lord will be punished severely in the Hell causing mutilation of the original mould of their creation. All human beings on earth must, therefore, live with God-consciousness and avoid disobedience to His commands to seek salvation in the Hereafter.

## **6. God Granted Wonderful Hands to Humankind:**

The Almighty had specially bestowed humankind with wonderful hands which can be utilized for multifarious purposes. Human hands help them to grow and reap crops to utilize them in various manners to level the lands to travel over the seas and in the air and use them for thousand types of construction and inventions of new things day by day. The particular form and capability of human hands is, therefore, a special feature differentiating man from all other creatures in the universe.

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Qur'ān 5:60 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:47 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Qur'ān 23:104 Yusuf Ali.

**7. نفس or Self:**

The man is unique in its creation because the Almighty gave him the Nafs which can also be described as personality for each individual on earth. In spite of their common origin, they differ in their response to the guidance from the Lord because each and every person cannot think and act identically. Human beings are, therefore, responsible for their acts and deeds for which they will be recompensed by the Lord. No other creature has been gifted with personality. For further details please study Nafs in chapter 4 titled 'Uniquely Blessed Creature of the Lord' in our book '*The Kingdom of God on Earth or the New World Order*'.

**8. God Breathed His Spirit Into Man:**

God said:

71. Behold, Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay: 72."When I have fashioned Him (in due proportion) and breathed into Him of My spirit, fall ye down In obeisance unto Him.<sup>22</sup>

**This was perhaps the greatest favor of the Lord on man that He breathed His spirit into him.** We had already pointed out that the Almighty had exalted humankind over the angels by commanding them to bow before man. Humankind, therefore, has certain essential features that differentiate them from the animals. The most important among them was the breathing of the Lord's spirit in them. The conflux of God's spirit with God's guidance is the most important features of humankind. Being a special creature of the Lord, humankind must obey the Almighty and reflect many of the beautiful attributes of the Lord. Justice, truth, mercy, forgiveness, generosity, tolerance, patience of the Lord must, therefore, be adopted by them to prove themselves as rightful representative of the Lord on earth. The moment, they set aside the God's guidance and become greedy, proud, arrogant, oppressive, usurper and killer of their own species violating the commandments of the Lord, they debase them into

<sup>22</sup> Al-Qur'ān 38:71-72 Yusuf Ali.

retrograded forms of beasts. The main crime of humanity is that ignoring the guidance from the Lord, they formulate different codes of law to serve their own interests. Similarly, philosophers or powerful people have been giving their suggestions to serve the kings, the powerful and the ruling classes among them. Such wise men, therefore, stood in defence of injustice and miseries for weaker and poorer members of the society.

Plato (428-348 BC) was of the opinion that the superior had the right to rule over the inferior. He says "*Justice consists in the superior ruling over and having more than the inferior*". Aristotle, held that: "**For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule... And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life**" (Aristotle, *Politics*).<sup>23</sup> The Great philosopher also states that barbarians are slaves by nature. (*Politics* 1.2-7; 3.14). Greek philosophers, therefore, went up to coining the term 'natural slaves' or 'tame animals' for the members of their own species. Some of them even believed that slaves or women had no souls.

Based on philosophies as quoted above, certain powerful nations claiming to be master races held that the vanquished nations were born only to serve the superior nations. Natural slaves or downtrodden people, therefore, had no rights at all. Such disparities on the basis of color, power or language etc. therefore, **knock the bottom out of the concept of humanity as well as the human rights**. It is futile to discuss human rights without determining the dividing line between humanity, animality and bestiality etc. **Mankind had, therefore, been an ambiguous term till the divine declaration (49:13) quoted earlier:**

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<sup>23</sup> BBC (archives), Ethics Guide, *Philosophers Justifying Slavery*, 2014.

It was in violation of the commandment of the Lord that human beings themselves created the differences between various people, tribes and nations. Non-acceptance of universal brotherhood and equality of rights was, therefore, the cause of various conflicts and miseries in the world. Some powerful people have been so arrogant that they even attached no sanctity to the life of other human beings.

Since the people of Israel were violating certain commandments of the Almighty, therefore, they were reminded that:

On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel that **if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.** Then although there came to them Our messengers with clear signs, yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.<sup>24</sup>

The essential value of human life is god-given. Those who take the lives of others without any justification as per the divine law are amongst the greatest criminals as pointed out by the Qur'ān. As a reminder to the transgressors, therefore, we have recounted in the book some important events of the past where the crimes against humanity committed by powerful nations have been described to remind the transgressors about their accountability before the Lord.

The most conspicuous examples of nationhood or differentiation from other people on the basis of ethnicity could be observed in the Egyptians. According to the Qur'ān, pharaoh '*broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief*' (28:4). Besides this, the Pharaohs had been callous and tyrant despots to enslave people or to employ their own citizens to work without wages. The pharaoh of Moses was perhaps the first person to treat the Israelites as alien people having no rights at all. Alexander the great was the first emperor who not

<sup>24</sup> Al-Qur'ān 5:32 Yusuf Ali.

only started colonizing different lands but also to assert supremacy of the Greek culture and to introduce the same throughout his empire. Later on the Roman colonizers came up with a clear cut concept of citizenship to deprive the slaves and alien people from any human rights. The subjugated people and the slaves being non-citizens of Rome had no rights at all.

The Israelites, however, learnt no lesson from their past. Judaism was perhaps the first religion which divided human beings into Israelites, Goyim, Gentiles and numerous other nations in the world. Pretending themselves to be the only people of God or the chosen race, they reserved most of the privileges and blessings of the Lord for themselves while denying any benediction of the Almighty for others. Similarly, the Brahmin community of India made themselves a sanctified and superior race to be served by other people who were inferior to them. Perhaps hundreds of millions of Mulattos i.e. cross breed between a white male and black female in the American continents were living in conditions like that of Dalits in India. Human beings, therefore, had themselves divided humanity into different ranks among which some were born only to serve the superior races while only the privileged classes enjoyed the rights to rule over others.

Islam emphatically pronounced common humanity for all *Bani Adam* (descendants of Adam and Eve). As such, all human beings enjoy universal citizenship on earth and have the same intrinsic worth and entitlement to life, equality, dignity and blessings of the Lord with other members of their species. According to the Almighty, no one had the right to assert his superiority over others. The Lord, however, honors those who live righteously under the fear of their accountability before Him.

All people know that they are not their own creators nor the creators of the earth and heaven. They have no foreknowledge about their life, death and fate on the earth. It must, therefore, be clear to them that their life after death is in the hands of some supreme authority

i.e. the Creator, by whatever name they call Him. They also know that **law is the will of the supreme**. The said consciousness must make them submit their wills to the will of the Lord with utter humility on their part. It is only the arrogance of race, power, wealth, and advancement of knowledge or any other worldly superiority which may motivate them to transgressions of the commandments of the Almighty. As against the transgressors, these are god-fearing people who feel themselves duty-bound to follow the guidance of the Lord and treat the poorer and the weaker people with humaneness enjoined by the Almighty. They keep in mind that kind and courteous treatment with all kith and kin and especially with the parents has been stressed in the Qur'ān and the Ahadith repeatedly.

### **Rights of the Neighbours:**

Mark the Evangelist records that 'one of the scribes asked Jesus as to which is the first commandment of all? Jesus said "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**. There is none other commandment greater than these".<sup>25</sup> The Christians also need to remember that **the Lord our God is one Lord** and Jesus was a strict monotheist. He never had any concept of trinity. As regards loving your neighbour, Jesus had summarized the guidance in the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment as quoted below:

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.<sup>26</sup>

It is for the Christians, therefore, to think how much they have acted upon the commandments of the Lord especially during the First and the Second World Wars.

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<sup>25</sup> Mar 12:28-32 KJV.

<sup>26</sup> Exo 20:17 KJV.

There is no doubt that the neighbours and human beings have great rights in the sight of the Lord. Even the Holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

Ibn Abbas reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "**He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbor to his side goes hungry.**"<sup>27</sup>

In view of all this, we find no justification for massacre, usurpation, oppression and subjugation of other nations by the advanced and powerful nations. In spite of all this, the Christians in the Western Hemisphere have not turned to the Lord repentantly. Instead of eliminating usury, slavery and subjugation of others, they have changed only the names of such institutions to befool themselves and the others. Consequently slavery, though prohibited under the law prevails throughout the world in different disguised forms or new names assigned to it. Justice has become almost non-existent in the world. Politics and trade is based entirely on the lies of the leaders of super powers or the magnates of corporatocracy in the world. World morals have been fast deteriorating since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Our chapter No. 10 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume titled '*Towards the New World Order*', contains a summery of human activities against its own species.

The unspeakable cruelties of the colonizers in Australia and American continents indicate that human beings had become extinct from the world. Besides dehumanization of the slaves, the enslavers also had no merits to be counted among the human beings. Our designs to annihilate all people on earth reflect lack of human foresight. The present interest-based world possessing and improving the arms of massive destruction are fast approaching a total collapse of the human civilization. We are sitting at such a flash-point where any mad-brain, short-circuiting or fault in the controlling systems may cause total annihilation of humankind from earth

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Bayhiqi, *Sunan al-Kubra*, Hadith No. 19049, 18099, Sahih Al-Jame, No. 5382 (Grade: Sahih (authentic) according to Al-Albani)

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within a few minutes. Our satanic concept, that '**I'm better than he**' with better rights to possess the entire sources of the world, may continue adding to mischief and wickedness of man on earth.

### **Humanism:**

After discussing the essential natural features differentiating a human being from an animal or a beast, we also need to discuss specific qualities that make us human beings. While animals are innocent, sinless and morally neutral, human beings have conscience, intellect and guidance which oblige them to behave in a responsible manner. We have, therefore, carefully pointed out certain events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the present century to initiate discussions about the human behavior which may affect us or the generations to come. Research scholars throughout the world are, therefore, requested to analyse the modern trends and the possible outcome of the same. It is high time that we may turn to the Lord repently and mend our behavior not only for our own survival but to save entire human population from elimination due to the avaricious decisions of misguided and proud leaders of the superpowers in the world. May Almighty Allah guide us to the straight path towards Him.

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The Author will be extremely obliged to the scholars and the readers who suggest improvements and corrections in the text to remove discrepancies if any in the next edition.

# KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

## **Kingdom of Heaven**

The Sermon on the Mount also contains the following teachings and prayer of Jesus Christ:

- 9.** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10.** Thy kingdom come.  
**Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.**<sup>28</sup>

Although the Christians have been reciting the aforesaid words of Jesus Christ for about two thousand years yet we doubt that they ever had proper comprehension of the prayer. What do we mean by uttering the words '*Hallowed be thy name*' and '*Thy kingdom come*'? Do we mean that the name of the Almighty had not already been hallowed throughout the universe or His kingdom did not extend up to the earth? Alternately, if holiness and the Kingdom of God had already been prevailing from the time infinity then why to pray fervently for the advent of the same? The final part of the prayer i.e. '*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*', however, helps us to understand the true import of the prayer. The dedication of the book '**Your Will be Done on Earth**' Copyright 1958 of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, reads as under:

*DEDICATED  
to Man's Loving Creator,  
who has willed  
a perfect government of  
righteousness over  
the earth.*

The dedicators were conscious of the fact that the will of God can be implemented on earth only through a perfect government of the righteous. Thy Kingdom Come, therefore, implores the same.

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<sup>28</sup> Mat 6:9-10 KJV.

Although the Hebrew Bible did not use the term Kingdom of God yet it had various references to it in the terms 'His Kingdom', 'Your Kingdom', 'Your's is the Kingdom O' Lord!' (1Ch 29:10-12). We, therefore, need to know the correct meanings of the 'Kingdom'.

Kingdom is usually defined as a realm, a country, state, territory ruled by a king or queen. Kingdom is a territory where the authority or the will of the supreme prevails. As regards the will of God for human beings, it is always expressed in words which we know as the Law of the Lord.

Doing the will of the Lord on earth signifies submission of human will to the Divine. Alternately, it may mean self-surrender of human beings before the law/commandments of the Lord. Human beings, as such, are obliged to live constantly under the fear of their accountability before the sovereign Lord. Instead of pursuing their own lusts and desires they are duty bound to obey all His commandments. Most of the prophets of the Lord have, therefore, been preaching to their followers that:

"So fear Allah, and obey me."<sup>29</sup>

Those who fear Allah must obey him and follow the prophet of their time. God said:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.<sup>30</sup>

God also said:

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you (...).<sup>31</sup>

While reciting the words of the prayer of Jesus, we confess that the **will of God is being fulfilled perfectly in the heaven but not on Earth**. Why is it so? Does the Lord lack powers to do so or He needs our

<sup>29</sup> Al-Qur'ān 26:108 (Yusuf Ali), see also: 26:110, 126, 131, 144, 150, 163, 179.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Qur'ān 16:90 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>31</sup> ibid 4:59.

prayers to impose His will on earth? To know the answer, we shall try to understand the difference between the meanings of '*the Kingdom of Heaven*' and '*the Kingdom of God on earth*'. In this respect, we feel that even the evangelist like Matthew was confused to understand the difference between the meanings of these terms. The frequent Matthean use of the 'Kingdom of Heaven' as an equivalent of the 'Kingdom of God' (referred to about 5 times in his Gospel), alludes to the same.

Like all other prophets of Israel both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had been the followers of the law and faith of Moses. They agreed with the preachings of the prophets about the coming kingdom of God. They were also the last warners from the LORD towards the Israelites. Their teachings, therefore, were based on the Jewish concept that '*God/Lord is the King*'<sup>32</sup>. Mark being the first among the composers of the Gospels records that:

**14.** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. **15.** And saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye,** and believe the gospel.<sup>33</sup>

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**<sup>34</sup>

As such, both John and Jesus were rehearsing the words of the prophetic hope of a divine kingdom administered under the law of the Lord for which good efforts had been made by many prophets earlier to John and Jesus. The establishment of kingdom of God on earth had, therefore, been the climax of the good news (Gospel) received through the prophets. The said divinely ordained privilege, however, was reserved for the prophet promised by the Lord. This was the reason due

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<sup>32</sup> Ps. 10:16, 47:7, 22:28, 74:12, 99:1, 105:7, 123:2, Isiah 33:22, Zech 14:9 etc.

<sup>33</sup> Mar 1:14-15 KJV. See also Mat 4:12-22, Luk 4:14-15, 5:1-11.

<sup>34</sup> Mat 4:17 KJV.

to which no one prior to Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) could succeed to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

The verses quoted above from Mark, Mathew and Luke contained two important revelations.

1. The good news of the coming Kingdom of God on earth.
2. The last warning to the Israelites to repent.

We shall, therefore, give priority to the discussion of the kingdom of God here. As regards the repentance, the same shall be discussed subsequently.

Now the question arises why the coming of the kingdom of God was fervently prayed for by Jesus Christ and in what sense it is the Gospel i.e. the good news for the people? Perhaps first four verses of Psalms 119 throw some light on it:

1. ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. 2. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. 3. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways. 4. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.<sup>35</sup>

Although the theme has been repeated numerously in the Old Testament yet another part of the Psalms has laid better emphasis on the same.

A Jewish song of degrees contains that:

1. Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. 2. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. 3. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. 4. Behold, that **thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.**<sup>36</sup>

It transpires from the above that human happiness and rescue from all miseries on earth or the Hereafter lie in living by the law of the Lord consciously fearing about one's accountability before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment. To achieve the said object, humankind have to believe in one and the only Lord God of the Universe

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<sup>35</sup> Psa 119:1-4 KJV.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid 128:1-4.

where all of them are slaves of the God. As such, **only the unity of God and universal brotherhood of human beings** can create a classless society not differentiated by their self-acquired social superiority, birthrights, caste or Jati system. Human beings are themselves the slaves of the Almighty. Slaves, as such, have no right to enslave their brethren. If per chance they find anyone in that condition they must try to restore the position accorded to them by the Lord as soon as possible. Under no circumstances, human beings have the authority to inflict cruelties or to exploit the members of their own species. Nothing can save the wicked people from punishment by the Lord except through sincere repentance from sin, seeking forgiveness of the Lord with a firm resolve not to disobey the commandments of the Lord in future. This is the universal and everlasting panacea for doom, despair and wickedness of the human beings. **Kingdom of God on Earth, therefore, means a kingdom ruled by human beings under the law and constant fear of accountability before the Almighty.**

## Man as Trustee of the Lord

In our book i.e. *The Kingdom of God on Earth and The New World Order* we discussed in detail about creation of the heavens, the earth and everything else throughout the Universe.<sup>37</sup> We also tried to explain the purpose of creation in the light of the revelation of the Lord in the Qur'ān. It had been observed that all the creatures had pledged to serve the Lord and obey all His commandments willingly yet when offered to fulfill the trust of the Lord independently, they humbly declined the offer. They were scared of their inabilitys to discharge the liabilities without constant control and guidance from the Almighty. Only man proved to be reckless as well as daring to undertake the

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<sup>37</sup> For further details please refer to our book titled '*Kingdom of God on Earth or the New World Order*'.

responsibilities of the trust but unluckily, he could not fulfill the same. The Qur'ān reveals that:

Moreover He comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly." They said: "We do come (together), in willing obedience.<sup>38</sup>

We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it;- He was indeed unjust and foolish.<sup>39</sup>

Since all the creatures had meekly declined to undertake the responsibility of the trust, therefore, the Lord put everything in the universe under direct compulsion in such manner that nothing could swerve even to the slightest degree from the will of the Almighty. Different creatures were either programmed by the Lord or provided with inbuilt guidance so that they had no option to transgress any of the commandments. The sun, the moon, the stars, all the heavenly bodies and the planets including earth were strictly bound to follow the courses predetermined for them. Even the angels and different forces of nature enjoyed no liberty to violate any of the commandments of the Lord. Everything in the nature continued to operate flawlessly under the control of the Lord for billions and billions of years up to the creation of man and Jinn. The said system, therefore, can be described as **the Kingdom of Heaven.**

The Kingdom of Heaven is the comprehensive and eternal system continuing to work perfectly for all times to come. All evolutionary processes throughout the universe are taking place under the day to day commandments of the Lord while heavenly bodies had been moving exactly on their perfectly computed courses and under the unchanging balancing powers like velocity, gravity and repulsion as accorded by the Almighty. Other forces of nature are also subject to commandments of the Lord forever. Rotation of earth, regulation of seasons, and alteration of day and night,

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<sup>38</sup> Al-Qur'ān 41:11 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>39</sup> ibid 33:72.

control of atmosphere are the realm of the sovereign Lord. Creation of every type remains in the hand of the Almighty while mankind can only adjust or change different things into new shapes to fulfill his temporary requirements. Except for certain liberties of conduct granted to jinn and man on earth everything including the births, the deaths and the bodily systems of all living beings serve under the automatic control of the Almighty. As such, before creation of jinn and man no other creature had the liberty to violate the commandments of the Lord or to create any disorder in the universe. The concept of sin in the universe, therefore, did not exist before the creation of *Saqalain* (the bearers of the burden of trust) i.e. Jinn and Man. Earth is, perhaps, the only planet in the universe where the Almighty was pleased to create two new species who in spite of enjoying free will, were obliged to choose between the good or bad keeping in view the guidance of the Lord sent to them through His prophets.

## **The Kingdom of God on Earth**

Taking the Big Bang incident as a given factor, we can say that more than 13.7 billion years after the said event, the Almighty was pleased to create Men with freedom from natural compulsion, granting them free will to choose between different options before them and to act in accordance with their own decision. The purpose of their creation was to test and try their independent conduct on earth to determine who among them abide by the commandments of the Lord as against those who transgress the same to follow their own lusts and desires. It was merely for the purpose of the test and trial of man and jinn under complete freedom from compulsion that the Lord granted them freedom from natural compulsion. The liberty of choice and action granted to Jinn and man, however, did not deprive the Almighty from his discretion to exercise prompt control wherever he intended to do so. In order to provide independence of choice and action to them, the Lord took on Him not to intervene in their decisions

so that the human conduct could be observed under their free will.

The Almighty directed the human beings to subdue the earth and to rule over it in accordance with His law. We could call this the 'New World Order' introduced for a limited period within a limited sphere to test and try the conduct of jinn and man on earth. They, therefore, enjoy freedom to think, choose and to act upon their decisions.

According to the Qur'ān the Jinn were created from the flame of fire. Taking in view the modern scientific discoveries the probable time of the creation of Jinn might have been during the Hadean period<sup>40</sup> when the earth itself was like a flame of fire. Jinn<sup>41</sup>, as such, had been the first inhabitants of earth. With the exception of a few pious persons among the jinn most of them had been rebellious as well as notorious for spreading wickedness. Long after the creation of Jinn, the Almighty decided to create man to be tested and tried on the planet earth.

As against all other creatures in the universe, Jinn and Men were created with certain peculiarities not found even in the angels. The Lord bestowed mankind with independence, intellect, knowledge, liberties to choose between various options available to them and to act in accordance with their own decision. The complicated nature of human beings combined various needs, shortcomings, lusts, inclinations both towards good or bad and their openness to dangers like fire and other natural calamities was meant to try performance and response of each individual during his trial period till his death. The Lord, however, had perfect foreknowledge of the possibility of sinfulness as well as righteous conduct of man. To rehearse and revive His message, the Lord

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<sup>40</sup> The name "Hadean" comes from Hades, the ancient Greek god of the underworld i.e. from 4.6 billion years ago to 4 billion years before the present time.

<sup>41</sup> For details please refer to our chapter on Jinn and Satan in book 1 of the *Original Sin and Salvation* series.

continued to send his messengers towards each and every community in the world.<sup>42</sup>

## The Great Misconception

The people of Book such as the Jews and the Christians had been suffering from the misconception that Muhammad (pbAh) was the Prophet of the Arabs. No doubt, the holy Prophet was born among the Arabs but he was undoubtedly the prophet promised by the Lord in the Bible (Gen 49:10, Deu 18:9-20, 33:2, Jer 31:31-34 and John 14:16-20 etc.). According to the Qur'ān, Abraham had prayed to the Almighty for his advent at Makkah (Al-Qur'ān 2:129). As such, he was the last messenger from the Almighty sent towards all humankind and Jinn, as bearer of final blessings from the Lord. All the people in the world, therefore, have equal rights to seek blessings through him. Being a prophet of the Lord towards entire humankind, Muhammad had no limitations on his assignments such as we find in case of Moses deputed primarily to relieve the Israelites from the Egyptians, to teach them law and to guide them towards Canaan. Similarly, Jesus came only to retrieve the lost sheep of the house of the Israelites (Mat 15:24, 10:6). Assignment of both these prophets was limited to Israel than responsibility to guide all human beings. Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) on the other hand came with world-wide responsibilities to guide all the descendants of Adam on earth (7:158). He, therefore, welcomed all the communities of the world to share the universal blessings of the Almighty without any distinction of race, region, caste, color or any further description separating one man from the other. Hence, it is a great mistake of the Jews as well as the Christians to deny Muhammad as the promised prophet in spite of the fact that they found him exactly in accordance with the predictions in their scriptures. They went astray from him and pretended other persons as the promised ones but no other person contained all the

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<sup>42</sup> Al-Qur'ān 92:10-12.

attributes foretold for the promised one. Factually, there has been no other contender with the Holy Prophet (pbAh) for the unique privileges, the Lord had bestowed on Muhammad (pbAh).

## Mercy for All Creatures

Addressing the Holy Prophet (pbAh) the Almighty said:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ .

We sent thee not, but as a Mercy for all creatures.<sup>43</sup>

There, as such, is no doubt that the Holy Prophet (pbAh) was a source of mercy and blessings for all the people in the world. It was he who explained all things to the human beings to provide them the best guidance towards the Almighty. God said:

(... ) وَرَزَقْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبَيَّنًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَشُرُّى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ .

(...) and we have sent down to Thee the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, glad tidings to Muslims.<sup>44</sup>

The Lord had further affirmed that:

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يَسِّينُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَغْفُلُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ  
قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ . يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَتَيَ رَضْوَانَهُ سَبِيلَ الشَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ  
مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ يَادُهُ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ .

15. O people of the Book! there hath come to you Our Messenger, revealing to you much that ye used to hide In the Book, and passing over much (That is Now unnecessary). there hath come to you from Allah a (new) light and a perspicuous Book, 16. wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety, and leadeth them out of darkness, by His will, unto the light,- guideth them to a path that is straight.<sup>45</sup>

The God also instructed the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to inform the people that:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يَنْهَا وَيُبِيَّثُ فَاقْتُلُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ الَّذِي يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَآتَيْتُهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

<sup>43</sup> ibid 21:107.

<sup>44</sup> ibid 16:89.

<sup>45</sup> ibid 5:15-16.

Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah, to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He That giveth both life and death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, who believeth in Allah and His words: follow him that (so) ye may be guided.<sup>46</sup>

It is evident from the above that the assignment of Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) was not limited to any particular species, nation, race or region but it extended to each and every creature of the Lord in the universe which also included Jinn. Alas! Most of the human beings take him as their adversary and refuse to follow him. They, therefore, deprive themselves of the blessings of the Lord.

The great favor of the Lord on the believers is also evident from the following:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمْ آياتٌ وَّبَرَكَاتٌ وَّعِلْمٌ مُّبِينٌ .  
الْكِتَابُ وَالْحِكْمَةُ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ لَهُ صَلَالٌ مُّبِينٌ .

Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.<sup>47</sup>

## Vicegerent of the Lord

It is pertinent to note here that from the very beginning, the Lord God had created Adam and Eve with the predestination to serve as His vicegerents on earth. This was an assignment of utmost responsibility with great nobility attached to it. Even the angels envied the said distinction of Adam (Al-Qur'ān 2:30). To establish authority of his vicegerent on earth, the Lord God subordinated each and everything in the heaven and earth to bow to the requirements of man. The said favor has been disclosed in the following:

<sup>46</sup> ibid 7:158. See also 22:49 and 34:28.

<sup>47</sup> Al Qur'ān 3:164 Yusuf Ali.

And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: Behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect.<sup>48</sup>

And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day hath he (also) made subject to you.<sup>49</sup>

We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.<sup>50</sup>

Angels had been the superior most creatures of the Lord before creation of Adam. In order to exalt Adam over the angels, the Almighty pre-announced His advent commanding the angels to bow before him. All angels prostrated before Adam as ordered by the Lord. This shows that the almighty elevated His vicegerent to such an extent that everything in nature and all the living beings throughout the universe were subdued before him. Man, too, was assigned the duty to subdue everything on earth<sup>51</sup> in accordance with the commandments of the Lord. Since the Lord had honored humankind over all his creatures, it was unbecoming of the vicegerent of the Lord to worship or bow before anyone except the Almighty. Hence man's turning to gods other than the Lord or their bowing before the deities of their own making or idols as well as molten figures and images makes them infidels than believers in the Almighty.

As regards Iblees, he was a Jinn. To try his conduct, the Almighty had granted him liberty to obey or disobey the commandments of the Lord. For any transgression, however, he was accountable before Him. In consideration of his long time worship of the Lord, the Almighty had given him the privilege to worship in the company of the angels. Ultimately, when the Almighty commanded all the angels to bow before Adam as vicegerent of the Lord on earth, Iblees became haughty and chose to rebel against the commandment of the

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<sup>48</sup> ibid 45:13.

<sup>49</sup> ibid 14:33. See also 14:32.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Qur'ān 17:70 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>51</sup> Gen 1:28.

Lord. Due to his arrogant refusal, he became accursed of the Lord. Satan, however, sought respite from the Lord, which was given to him till the Doomsday. Instead of utilizing the respite to repent or to seek forgiveness from the Almighty Iblees vowed to divert human beings from the straight path towards the Lord (Al-Qur'ān 38:81).

## **"I am Better Than He"**

The appointment of the vicegerent of the Lord on earth was the only incident of its nature ever since the creation of the universe. Instead of any natural compulsion, human beings were bestowed with freedom to rule on earth in accordance with the Law of the Lord to establish the kingdom of God there. Adam as Viceroy or Deputy of the Lord was invested with such nobility that no other creature had ever enjoyed before him. The same is evident from the special pronouncement of the Almighty about the creation and placement of man as the representative of the Lord to rule on the earth on His behalf. Angels were, therefore, commanded to bow in veneration of Adam as soon as they see him. The Qur'ān has concisely referred to the same in the following:

**71.** Behold, Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay: **72.**"When I have fashioned Him (in due proportion) and breathed into Him of My spirit, fall ye down In obeisance unto Him." **73.** so the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: **74.** not so Iblis: He was haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith. **75.** ((Allah)) said: "O Iblis! what prevents Thee from prostrating Thyself to one whom I have created with My hands? art Thou haughty? or art Thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?" **76.** (Iblis) said: "I am better than He: Thou createdst me from fire, and Him Thou createdst from clay." **77.** ((Allah)) said: "Then get Thee out from here: for Thou art rejected, accursed. **78.** "And My curse shall be on Thee till the Day of Judgment." **79.** (Iblis) said: "O My Lord! give me then respite till the Day the (dead) are raised." **80.** ((Allah)) said: "Respite then is granted thee- **81.** "Till the Day of the time appointed." **82.** (Iblis) said: "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all In the wrong,- **83.** "Except Thy servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace)." **84.** ((Allah)) said: "Then it is

just and fitting- and I say what is just and fitting- **85.** "That I will certainly fill Hell with Thee and those that follow thee,- every one.<sup>52</sup>

Although all the angels had immediately prostrated in veneration of Adam as per commandment of the Lord yet Satan being a jinn refused to obey, on the pretext that he was better than man. Not only this, but he also blamed the Lord for throwing him out of the way. He, therefore, took a vow that he would be sitting at the highway towards the Lord to prevent people from seeking repentance and forgiveness from Him.

**16.** He said: "Because Thou hast thrown me out of the way, Lo! I will lie In wait for them on Thy straight way: **17.** "Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left: nor wilt Thou find, In Most of them, gratitude (for Thy mercies).<sup>53</sup>

## Pride the Root Cause of All Evils

It was due to the pride of Satan that the Almighty cursed him. Since pride was the root cause of all evils, therefore, the Almighty condemned the proud, boastful and arrogant people in the following:

(...) Lo! Allah loveth not such as are proud and boastful.<sup>54</sup>

(...) But those who are disdainful and arrogant, He will punish with a grievous penalty; Nor will they find, besides Allah, any to protect or help them.<sup>55</sup>

Nor walk on the earth with insolence: for thou canst not rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height.<sup>56</sup>

"And swell not thy cheek (for pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth; for Allah loveth not any arrogant boaster.<sup>57</sup>

Following Ahadith of Holy Prophet (pbAh) also censure the pride:

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Allah, Most High, has removed from you the pride of the pre-Islamic period and its boasting in ancestors. One is only a

<sup>52</sup> Al-Qur'ān 38:71-85 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>53</sup> ibid 7:16-17.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:36 Muhammad M. Pickthal.

<sup>55</sup> ibid 4:173 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>56</sup> ibid 17:37.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Qur'ān 31:18 Yusuf Ali. See also 7:36, 28:76, 44:19, 57:23 etc.

pious believer or a miserable sinner. You are sons of Adam, and Adam came from dust. Let the people cease to boast about their ancestors. They are merely fuel in Jahannam; or they will certainly be of less account with Allah than the beetle which rolls dung with its nose.<sup>58</sup>

Narrated 'Abdullah bin Umar: Allah's Apostle said, "A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. Whoever fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection."<sup>59</sup>

To eliminate the Satanic concept that 'I am better than he', the Prophet (pbAh) denounced the pride and also introduced great reforms to perfect the human morals on earth. Among his greatest achievements, therefore, we find extreme stress on universal brotherhood and equality of the rights of all human beings on earth. Details may be found under the topic '*Universal Brotherhood of Mankind and Equality of Rights*' in the end of this chapter.

Although the Angels enjoyed no liberty to disobey any commandments of the Lord but they also had a feeling of deprivation of the dignity being bestowed on man. Here is the revelation describing the anxiety of the angels:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? - whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."<sup>60</sup>

Angels, too, had a limited knowledge of the wisdom and the purposes of the Lord. They, therefore, failed to know that the Lord intended to test and try human beings in

<sup>58</sup> Abu Dawud, Chapter 41, Hadith Number 5097.

<sup>59</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari, tr. by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Islamic University Al-Medina Al-Munawwara, (Dar Al Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980) Volume 3, Book 43, Number 622:

<sup>60</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:30 Yusuf Ali.

most complicated and difficult circumstances than those of the angels.<sup>61</sup>

The Lord also knew that he had implanted various lusts and weaknesses in man.<sup>62</sup> He, therefore, had perfect fore-knowledge that human nature in the absence of direct control of the Lord was likely to lead them astray from the straight path. Since Satan also had vowed to misguide human beings, therefore, the Almighty decided to put Adam and Eve in the Garden for their initial training before giving them the charge of their actual responsibilities on earth. As an additional safeguard of Adam and Eve, the Lord warned them to be vigilant against the evil suggestions of Satan:

**117.** Then We said: "O Adam! verily, this is an enemy to thee and thy wife: so let him not get you both out of the Garden, so that thou art landed in misery. (...) **120.** but Satan whispered evil to him: He said, "O Adam! shall I lead Thee to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"

**121.** In the result, They both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: (...)<sup>63</sup>

Forgetfulness had been a natural trait of human beings. In spite of clear cut warning from the Lord, both Adam and Eve proved to be forgetful and neglectful of the reprimand. Through evil suggestion of Satan, both ate from the tree forbidden to them. Adam and Eve as such, were deprived of their apparel of bliss in the garden. When asked to show cause for their transgression, both Adam and Eve realized their fault and the ruinous consequences of the same. They, therefore, humbled themselves before the Lord. It has been revealed that:

Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord Turned towards him; for He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Al-Qur'ān 90:4.

<sup>62</sup> ibid 4:28.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Qur'ān 20:117, 120-121 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:37 Yusuf Ali.

## The Everlasting Divine Guidance for Salvation

As per guidance of the Lord, both Adam and Eve implored forgiveness and mercy from the Almighty through the words of inspiration received from Him. The same are quoted below:

They said: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.<sup>65</sup>

The utter humility, repentance and prayer for mercy by Adam and Eve were responded by gracious forgiveness from the Almighty. All the prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ had been preaching the same antidote as atonement for the sins of man. Repentance from sin, seeking forgiveness with firm resolve to turn away from sins had, therefore, been the preachings of all the prophets for salvation of mankind. Isaiah said:

**15.** And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. **16.** Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; **17.** Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. **18.** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. **19.** If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.<sup>66</sup>

Although Jonah had not committed any violation of the commandment of the Lord yet leaving the station without prior permission from the Almighty was a fault on his part. The Qur'ān reveals the same:

142. Then the big Fish did swallow him, and he had done acts worthy of blame. 143. Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allah, 144. He would certainly have remained inside the Fish till the Day of Resurrection.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> ibid 7:23.

<sup>66</sup> Isa 1:15-19 KJV.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Qur'ān 37:42-44 Yusuf Ali.

He repented in the following words:

(...) he cried through the depths of darkness, "**There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong!**" So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: and thus do We deliver those who have faith.<sup>68</sup>

Similar had been the tradition of King David when he failed in the trial:

"...and David gathered that We had tried him: he asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down, bowing (in prostration), and turned (to Allah in repentance). So We forgave him this (lapse): he enjoyed, indeed, a Near Approach to Us, and a beautiful place of (Final) Return."<sup>69</sup>

In the start of our discussion about Kingdom of God, we had quoted both from John the Baptist<sup>70</sup> and Jesus Christ<sup>71</sup> about repentance as the only way towards salvation. As such, **seeking forgiveness of the Lord with sincere repentance and resolve to do good thereafter is the everlasting way towards salvation.** Those who bypass the verdict of God to find any other shortcut or easy way towards salvation are obviously in the wrong.

As stated earlier Both Adam and Eve had learnt the bitter lesson of their transgression. As such, they were in a better position to take up their proper assignment of great responsibility on earth. Hence when they had completed their training in the Garden, the Lord commanded them to get down to take up their predestined assignment to begin their career on earth:

We said: "Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."<sup>72</sup>

## **Imposition of the Law of the Lord**

Obedience to the law of the Lord had been the first instruction to Adam and his descendants as per revelation of the Qur'ān. The Almighty had been

<sup>68</sup> ibid 21:87-88.

<sup>69</sup> ibid 38:24-25.

<sup>70</sup> Mar 1:14-15.

<sup>71</sup> Mat 4:12-22.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:38 Yusuf Ali.

rehearsing and reviving His guidance to the descendants of Adam and Eve so that the true message of the Lord may always be available to human beings. Both Adam and Eve did their best to establish the kingdom of the Lord on earth being administered under the law revealed to them. Hence, there had been no adverse report about their conduct up to their death. As regards their descendants, they gave a mixed response of vice or virtue. Even Cain the son of Adam chose to disobey the verdict of the Almighty. He had been the first human being on earth to follow Satan and to commit transgression by murdering his own brother. Ever since then, there had been some people living by the law of the Lord, while majority had been following their own interests as per evil suggestions of Satan.

It was through the prophets that humankind learnt about their own creation and about the super abundant provisions and blessings of the Creator on them. Last one among the prophets of the Lord had been the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh), known also as the prophet promised by the Lord. Like all other prophets before him, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) also reminded human beings about bounteous blessings the Lord and human obligation to worship and obey no one except the Lord and also to pay gratitude to Him. All such teachings providing awareness about the Lord and human obligations towards Him are described as **حقوق الله** in the *Islamic Shariah*. Both the Qur'ān and Ahadith of the Prophet (pbAh) have dealt with the same in great detail.

Since our present study is confined to human rights and especially their miseries, we shall be focusing on the same than going into the details of the Human duties towards the Lord. The paucity of the time and space at our disposal also does not allow us to cover all human rights in detail. In the present context, we shall be referring only to those human rights which secure them from miseries, cruelties and exploitation at the hands of other members of the human society. A substantial part of the book may, therefore, contain different aspects of

slavery or other inflictions of the human beings from the ancient times till today. The moral revolution introduced by Islam to mitigate all such gloomy aspects of human life shall also be recounted to show primary concern of Islam for completion of good moral conduct of man on earth.

The animal kingdom had always been based on the formula of might is right and struggle for existence. Darwin<sup>73</sup> perhaps derived his theory of evolution based on natural selection, struggle for existence and survival of the fittest by observing the characteristics of different species belonging to animal world, the birds, the reptiles and insects etc. Being extremely critical of the creation theory in the Old Testament, the History of Bible and faith as preached in the New Testament, he became an extremely controversial figure between the scientists, the theologians and the historians. Although the theories developed by him and others like Karl Marx and Nietzsche had overwhelming impact to promote secularism than Christianity yet there had been such drawbacks in their theories that failed to pose any challenge to the Divine Revelations in the Qur'ān. Darwin took no note of the fact that in spite of belonging to the animal world, human beings had been entirely different from other creatures due to specialties in their creation and also many other factors as detailed below:

While all other creatures and species of animals had been created through general commandment of كن (be), the Lord had created Adam with His own hands. God said:

(Allah) said: "O Iblis! What prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with my hands? Art thou haughty? Or art thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?"<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Charles Darwin (1809–1882), who proposed the theory of evolution by means of natural selection. He was the world renowned author of the '*Origin of Species*'. Originally a Christian i.e. Nonconformist Unitarian, he was the propounder of Evolution Theory, Natural selection and survival of the fittest. He was neither a strictly atheist nor a believer in the creation theory.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Qur'ān 38:75 Yusuf Ali.

The effect of the creation of man with the hands of the Lord is also evident from the following:

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds.<sup>75</sup>

Besides referring to the shape, size, beauty and marvelous hands granted to man, the verse also alludes to creation of man in the best circumstances and atmosphere of earth, its rotation, change of seasons and many other things congenial to the survival and evolution of man. Another revelation tells us that:

**1.** ((Allah)) Most Gracious! **2.** it is He who has taught the Qur'an. **3.** He has created man: **4.** He has taught Him speech (and intelligence).<sup>76</sup>

As such, teaching human beings how to speak and revelations of the Lord to them in words was the distinction of man not shared with the animals. God taught human beings to speak with intelligence. No animal species had been bestowed with the intellect like man. Human beings had been created as intellectual personalities bestowed with conscience, reason and wisdom. The next favor of God was to teach human beings how to read and write to acquire more and more knowledge and to pass the same to their descendants. God revealed:

He Who taught (the use of) the pen,- Taught man that which he knew not.<sup>77</sup>

Yet another favor was choosing Adam as vicegerent of the Lord on earth and subordination of all creatures including the angels and Jinn before him.<sup>78</sup> **The culmination of God's favor on humankind was the infusion of the spirit of God in man.**<sup>79</sup>

Darwin's theory of evolution, therefore, fails to show any evolutionary stage in the animal world trying to speak like man, to write with pen and to restore and transmit

<sup>75</sup> ibid 95:4.

<sup>76</sup> ibid 55:1-4.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Qur'ān 96:4-5 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 45:13, 14:33, 17:70.

<sup>79</sup> ibid 15:29.

knowledge to others. No other species can use its hands for multifarious jobs nor can any creation become like man without infusion of the spirit of the Lord.

In view of all this, only a misguided person can think of human evolution from animals especially when we find no preliminary stages in them of God's favors on humankind counted above. Mankind, therefore, are obliged to pay gratitude to the Lord for His bounteous blessing on them and for granting them superiority over all His creatures. It is now for man to abide by the guidance of the Lord by restraining their animal instincts for elevation towards the Almighty or to become lowest among the low<sup>80</sup> by violating the commandments of God. The latter are the people who oppress, overpower, exploit or eliminate the weaker members of their society. They had been acting like the beasts than the divinely guided and rational beings in the world.

As against the western empires, kingdoms or the republics, Islam preaches kingdom of God where the sovereign Lord is the only lawgiver in the heavens and the earth. All people are equal before the law and no one enjoys any priority or exception from obedience to the Law of the Lord. The western nations, on the other hand, never entertained the concept of surrendering themselves to the will of the Lord by obedience to His law. They instead had been preaching divinity of the kings who were held flawless and divine. It was said '**the king can do no wrong**'. Even the modern republics are another shape of the same formula of the might is right which continue to give more and more to the majority causing loss or oppression to the individuals or minorities among them. A historian has, therefore, observed that:

With the sufferings of the poor, as More saw them in Tudor England, he showed a keen sympathy. 'Our modern republics', he says, 'are nothing but a conspiracy of the rich. The poor are left uneducated, too often brought up in haunts of crime and vice, then punished for becoming thieves and vagabonds.' He comments on the number of thieves hanged in England – 'for the most part twenty hanged together on one gallows, and

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<sup>80</sup> ibid 95:5.

I cannot but marvel that thieves nevertheless are in every place so rife and so rank.<sup>81</sup>

In the modern times, it is not only the rich but also the majority that sets aside the Divine Guidance. Powerful or prosperous persons and nations in the world had been subjugating, enslaving or degrading the members of their own species by one excuse or the other. The will of the majority of human beings prevailed upon the will of the God. There had neither been any remorse for oppression of the helpless people nor generosity towards the poor. Rights only pertain to the powerful and the ruling classes in the modern democracies.

Although there had been numerous ways to exploit the weaker, the poor and the helpless people yet slavery, indebtedness and division among various classes had been the most favorite methods of inflicting miseries on human beings. We shall be discussing the same in Vol. II of the Book.

## **Perfection of Good Moral Character**

All prophets of the Lord had the prime duty to rehearse and revive the essentials of faith, law and the rituals of the worship. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) too had to fulfill the usual duties like other prophets. Being, however, the promised prophet and the last messenger of Allah towards all humanity, Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) had to address all the people in the world. He also had been assigned certain special responsibilities by the Lord.

Although each and every prophet had been providing law to his people but the responsibility to complete the law in each and every respect was enjoined only on the Holy Prophet (pbAh). As a corollary of the same, he had to implement the law in his presence so that the believers may not have any confusion about the method of its administration. He was perhaps the only Prophet sent with a purpose of purifying or sanctifying the

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<sup>81</sup> Carter, *A History of Britain*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, p. 336.

believers (Al-Qur'ān 2:151, 3:164). The concept will be elaborated subsequently.

All prophets of Lord had been preaching good moral character to their followers yet none of them succeeded to perfect the moral character of his followers. Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) was the only prophet of the Lord who actually established the kingdom of God on earth covering almost all territories in the present day Saudi Arabia. He, therefore created an ideal society of the believers ruled strictly under the law of the Lord. Perfection of good moral character had been enjoined on him by Almighty Allah:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّمَا بُعْثَتْ لِأَئِمَّمِ  
مَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

Abū Hurayrah relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "I have only been sent to perfect good moral character."<sup>82</sup>

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) continued to instill the best moral ethics among his companions during all 23 years of his prophetic mission on earth. He led them to god-consciousness, courtesy, humility and their duties towards close relatives as well as other people in the society. Those who adorned their personal lives with the moral injunctions of the Qur'ān and excellent traditions as well as precepts of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) were the rightly guided people forming the **kingdom of God on earth as beseeched by Jesus Christ**. All who follow them are sure to succeed in the present world and also in the Hereafter. Others who follow the proud and arrogant tradition of Satan and turn away from rectitude share the curse of the Lord with Iblees.

Islam, therefore, introduced the greatest reformation in the human rights by pronouncing universal brotherhood of mankind and equality of human rights throughout the world.

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<sup>82</sup> *Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Hadith No. 8595.

**Ch. 2-**

# HUMAN SUFFERINGS IN THE ANCIENT TIMES

## **Deep Concern about Human Sufferings**

History of man has witnessed widespread massacre, plundering atrocities, miseries, slavery, exploitation and numerous other vices committed by different people and nations against the poor and the helpless communities or the individuals. Study of historical records, therefore, presents us with horrible pictures of exploitation, brutalities, plundering, treachery, enslavement and oppression depicting indescribable human miseries at the hands of their own species. **Human beings, therefore, were the worst enemies of their own kind.** Only the human beings enjoy the special distinction in the animal world to enslave others and to subject them to humiliation, degradation, exploitation and torture. We shall, therefore, be having a cursory glance over the historical records to remind us of our inhuman activities throughout the ages. Human miseries and slavery are, therefore, the main themes of the book.

In spite of all wickedness of man, there had always been the divine guidance available to him to serve as the only ray of hope to recover from the darkness of despair. Among the numerous suggestions for a better future of mankind on earth, the divinely guided vision alone can ensure peaceful coexistence and survival of man on the planet Earth. Islamic traditions tell us that Abraham had been very kind, considerate and generous towards others. He used to relieve the oppressed to help the needy, to feed the poor and to entertain the guests and the foreigners. The Old Testament shows the fervent

reception of the guests by Abraham.<sup>83</sup> The Qur'ān has also endorsed the same.<sup>84</sup>

The people of Lot had been extremely wicked. The Lord revealed to Abraham about their chastisement telling him that:

And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous.<sup>85</sup>

Referring to the above, the Qur'ān narrates that:

**28.** and (remember) Lut: Behold, He said to His people: "Ye do Commit lewdness, such As no people In creation (ever) committed before you. **29.** "Do ye indeed approach men, and cut off the highway?- and practise wickedness (Even) In your councils?" but His people gave no answer but this: They said: "Bring us the wrath of Allah if Thou tellest the truth." **30.** He said: "O My Lord! help Thou me against people who do mischief!" **31.** when Our Messengers came to Abraham with the good news, They said: "We are indeed going to destroy the people of This township: for truly They are (addicted to) crime." **32.** He said: "But there is Lut there." They said: "Well do we know who is there : we will certainly save Him and His following,- except His wife: she is of those who lag behind!"<sup>86</sup>

Since the people of Lot refused to repent or to turn away from their sinfulness, they were chastised in the following manner:

And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!<sup>87</sup>

Job and his sons also had been mindful of charity, sacrifice and their duties towards welfare of human beings.<sup>88</sup> Isaiah said that: "*if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of*

<sup>83</sup> Gen 18:1-8.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Qur'ān 51:24-29.

<sup>85</sup> Gen 18:20 KJV.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Qur'ān 29:28-32 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>87</sup> ibid 7:84.

<sup>88</sup> Job 1:4-5.

noon".<sup>89</sup> Among other scriptural teachings are the following:

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: (Deu 15:7)

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. (Deu 24:19)

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again. (Pro 19:17)

### **Gautama Budha:**

Gautama Budha's original name was Sidhartha and his followers called him as Sakya Muni. He can be taken as founder of a popular religion in India which expanded up to China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and other areas in the world. Buddhism tells us nothing of God or his supreme powers, providence and judgment of human beings on the doomsday. There is, however, a vague reference that all things have emanated from Brahma and all must return to Him again. World is produced out of Brahma and **everything ends in extinction in Brahma.** The Buddhist priest had never been social moralists to whom one looked for instructions in the moral conduct.

Born about 563 BC, Buddha was perhaps the first saint or prophet of the Lord concerned primarily with the human sufferings. Although nothing can be said about accurate preservation of the events of life and preachings of the faith of Buddha yet according to the teachings extent today Buddha had visualized an endless cycle of pain in the world. Hence, according to him the first noble truth was that everything in life was suffering, anxiety and sorrow (*Dukkha*). The cause of all such pains was people's self-centered cravings and the desires. **The way to end all pain was to end all**

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<sup>89</sup> Isa 58:10 GNB.

**desires.** Budha, therefore, decided to renounce all pleasures in the world to conquer himself and to live without passion, without envy and without desire. To him this was the only way to escape from the sinfulness and miseries in the world. As such, the only escape from evil was escape from existence.

According to Buddha's teachings, escape could be attained by seeking wisdom. Only those who attained wisdom and enlightenment could overcome their desires and the pain to attain *Nirvanah* (heaven or paradise). *Nirvanah* was, therefore, the goal through which people could attain pleasure that cannot be lost.

## **Idealistic But Impracticable Teachings**

In the physical or material world, however, the extremely humane teachings of Buddha could hardly eliminate human sufferings. No doubt such teachings did promote sympathy for the sick and the suffering but overall improvement in the human condition could not be effected without full involvement of human beings to improve the overall lot of mankind. Although, Buddha's teachings failed to provide universal cure for human ailments yet his teachings reflecting deep concern about human miseries were by no means a smaller achievement. These teachings also needed comprehensive guidance to promote human welfare or happiness. Mere killing of human cravings or abandoning the world had neither been enjoined by the Lord on human beings nor can such teachings be followed by each and every person on earth. In case majority of people turned away from their worldly responsibilities to strive for growing eatables, to earn and to spend on the poor, all people would become paupers, hunger-stricken and desperate.

From Islamic teachings, we learn that the Lord had knowingly created human beings as a species entirely different from the angels. He was pleased to test and try them under the circumstances given to them. Instead of advising them to become angels, the hermits, the celibates, the virgins or becoming abstemious the Lord

enjoined on them to struggle hard, to earn for their own living for upkeep of their families. Humankind must always remember the first blessings and the commandment of the Lord after the creation of Adam and Eve.

**28.** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. **29.** And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.<sup>90</sup>

Humankind, therefore, have no justification to set aside the commandment of the Lord or to bring any change in their duties as per their own desires. Worldly duties including maintenance of families by earning for their upkeep is not only commanded by the Lord but also earns great reward from Him. The same is evident from words of the Holy Prophet (pbAh):

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: Of the dinar you spend as a contribution in Allah's path, or to set free a slave, or as a sadaqa given to a needy, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family.<sup>91</sup>

Since the Lord had created human beings as male and female with body and soul, therefore, they have no right to kill the body to elevate the soul or to refrain from lawful sex, food, drink, shelter and other necessities of life. According to Islamic precepts, whatever man is doing within the limits set by the God's law and to fulfill His commandments is counted as the worship of the Lord. Only neglect or violation of the commandments of God is a sin punishable by the Almighty. We shall be discussing the concept in some detail subsequently.

Teachings of Buddha can instill charity and kindness among his followers but no productive, progressive or

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<sup>90</sup> Gen 1:28-29 KJV.

<sup>91</sup> Sahih Muslim, Chapter 12, Book 5, Hadith Number 2181:

prosperous society can be built on the principles preached by him. Genuine human needs have to be fulfilled by constant efforts and toil by majority of the people on earth. Humankind must, therefore, use all their potentials to bring overall improvement in all spheres of their life to promote personal as well as collective welfare of mankind. Wandering hermits, saints, beggars, or those observing self imposed restraint from food, drink, clothing or shelter are not fulfilling the purpose of their creation as revealed by the Lord. Except for an ignorable minority, masses cannot adopt such a mode of living nor can any society thrive without full involvement in some creative activity or hard labor to provide basic necessities of life. The idealistic teachings of Buddha cannot, therefore, be adopted as the workable code of life for evolution of a progressive, prosperous and peaceful community. The same is evident also from the well balanced teaching contained in the God's covenant with the sons of Israel as reported by the Qur'ān:

And remember We took a covenant from the Children of Israel (to this effect): Worship none but Allah; treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practise regular charity. Then did ye turn back, except a few among you, and ye backslide (even now).<sup>92</sup>

## **Jesus and the Human Rights**

In the foregoing, we had quoted the commendable teachings of the Lord to worship the Almighty and to take proper care of the human rights. Jesus as a follower of Moses must also have rehearsed the same teachings of the Old Testament. To differentiate him from the Long chain of the prophets, the evangelists depicted teachings of Jesus Christ which seem to be odd and unworkable. They quote him having said:

**26.** If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:83 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>93</sup> Luk 14:27 KJV.

These teachings of Jesus seem to be abnormal. No doubt disciples must love the master more than anything or anyone else in the world but teaching of hatred towards one's parents, wife, children, brothers and sisters seem to be misquoted from him. Mathew, however, had a better version of the theme in the following:

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.<sup>94</sup>

The best version of the godliness and devotion to the Holy Prophet is, however, found in the Qur'ān:

Say: if it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce In which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings In which ye delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause;- then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious.<sup>95</sup>

Here is another commandment of the Lord:

The prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and His wives are their mothers. Blood-relations among Each other have closer personal ties, In the Decree of Allah. Than (the brotherhood of) believers and Muhajirs: nevertheless do ye what is just to your closest friends: such is the writing In the Decree (of Allah).<sup>96</sup>

As such, we feel that the evangelists have not quoted Jesus Christ exactly in accordance with his own words.

In addition to the above, we quote further sayings of Jesus Christ which seem to be impracticable for the followers:

**27.** And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.<sup>97</sup>

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow

<sup>94</sup> Mat 10:37 KJV.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Qur'ān 9:24 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>96</sup> ibid 33:6.

<sup>97</sup> Luk 14:27 KJV.

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Elsewhere, we have discussed the true import of bearing the cross while the evangelists and the interpreters of the gospels stress on literal meanings of the verses quoted above. The fact is that instead of being a strict master, Jesus Christ had been lenient with his disciples. He had been extremely concerned about good and kind treatment of human beings towards each other. According to the New Testament, he went to the extent of advising one of his followers that:

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.<sup>99</sup>

**21.** Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. **22.** And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.<sup>100</sup>

Obviously the teachings ascribed to Jesus Christ were too strict and unworkable. It was not possible for each and every person to act upon his teachings. Finding the task too difficult for him the dejected disciple went away from him. Jesus, however, was bent upon inculcating selflessness and charity for the poor among his followers. According to the quotation, he condemned the rich people by saying:

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.<sup>101</sup>

These teachings though extremely idealistic in their nature cannot be practiced in the world. If all followers of Jesus sold their possessions, they would soon be reduced to a society of beggars without there being any people to feed them. In case no rich man was eligible to enter the kingdom of heaven then imagine how many people in the world would be deprived of the paradise.

<sup>98</sup> Mat 16:24 KJV.

<sup>99</sup> ibid 19:21 KJV. See also Mar 10:21, Luk 18:22.

<sup>100</sup> Mar 10:21-22 KJV.

<sup>101</sup> Mat 19:24 KJV.

Let the Christian world search between themselves to find eligibility for the paradise. It is quite evident that the society based entirely on penniless people cannot survive. In view of the above we feel that the quotations recorded above are not the true words of Jesus Christ. These must have been the handiworks of some more enthusiastic idealists. The prophets of the Lord had neither been extremists nor just visionary reformers. They had been practical people living a normal life among other people and adopting golden mean between the extremes. As such, they had been the first to follow the commandments of the Lord themselves. Their followers took them as the role models to be imitated by them.

As against the teachings of Buddha and Jesus, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) did not despise riches out rightly. Islam counted wealth and bounteous blessings of the Lord as divine favor on holders of wealth, provided instead of loving the wealth too much and hoarding the same uselessly, they derived proper benefit themselves and also spent it to relieve other people from their hunger and miseries to increase welfare of the society. Wealth as such is neither a curse nor a disqualification for entering into paradise. Instead of despising riches, therefore, the Almighty has counted wealth, health and other bounties by good names such as *Fazal*, *Khair-e-Kathir*, *Rahmah* and *Rizqan Hasana*.<sup>102</sup> God says:

(...) But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will.<sup>103</sup>

Although the Lord counts wealth among His bounties on mankind yet he despises hoarding of wealth especially, when there exist extremely poor and needy people in the society. The Qur'ān has, therefore, exhorted the believers to spend substantial part of the bounties of the Lord to relieve the oppressed and indebted people from their miseries caused by poverty and lack of resources

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<sup>102</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:198, 3:174.

<sup>103</sup> ibid 2:212 Yusuf Ali. See also 3:37, 24:38, 30:38.

to meet their needs. In spite of this, the Lord did not advise the people to exceed the norms but to adopt the golden mean. God proclaims that:

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good-to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious.<sup>104</sup>

And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy,) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking).<sup>105</sup>

Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah, and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury, for them their reward is with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.<sup>106</sup>

By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love; and whatever ye give, of a truth Allah knoweth it well.<sup>107</sup>

So give what is due to kindred, the needy, and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the Countenance, of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.<sup>108</sup>

As regards the proportion of wealth to be spent on the poor, the Lord said that:

(...) They ask thee how much they are to spend; Say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus doth Allah Make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider.<sup>109</sup>

They ask thee what they should spend (In charity). Say: Whatever ye spend that is good, is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good, -Allah knoweth it well.<sup>110</sup>

Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes);<sup>111</sup>

Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become

<sup>104</sup> ibid 4:36.

<sup>105</sup> Al Qur'ān 51:19 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>106</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:262 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>107</sup> Al Qur'ān 3:92 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>108</sup> ibid 30:38.

<sup>109</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:219 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>110</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:215 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>111</sup> Al Qur'ān 25:67 Yusuf Ali.

blameworthy and destitute.<sup>112</sup>

As such, it is a must for all rich or well-to-do people to spend on the poor members of the society so that they may also lead an honorable life among them. Anyhow, no one should sell each and everything including his house to become destitute himself. As regards spending on charity purposes the Almighty has admonished the believers to avoid excessive love of worldly wealth which is not likely to endure forever. They must, therefore, keep in mind the assurance of good reward from the Almighty on the Day of Judgment. Those who ignore the commandments of the Lord to spend on the needy and the poor have been warned in the following manner.

1. woe to every (kind of) scandal-monger and-backbiter, 2. who pileth up wealth and layeth it by, 3. Thinking that His wealth would make Him Last for ever! 4. by no means! He will be sure to be thrown into that which breaks to pieces, 5. and what will explain to Thee that which breaks to pieces? 6. (it is) the Fire of (the wrath of) Allah kindled (to a blaze), 7. the which doth Mount (right) to the hearts: 8. it shall be made into a vault over them,<sup>113</sup>

O ye who believe! there are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in Falsehood devour the substance of men and hinder (them) from the way of Allah. **And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah: announce unto them a most grievous penalty.**<sup>114</sup>

And let not those who covetously withhold of the gifts which Allah Hath given them of His Grace, think that it is good for them: Nay, it will be the worse for them: soon shall the things which they covetously withheld be tied to their necks Like a twisted collar, on the Day of Judgment. To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Al Qur'ān 17:29 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>113</sup> Al Qur'ān 104 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>114</sup> Al-Qur'ān 9:34.

<sup>115</sup> Al Qur'ān 3:180 Yusuf Ali.

As against the stiff-necked disbelievers, the Almighty has repeated his assurance of bounteous rewards in the Hereafter:

Those who rehearse the Book of Allah, establish regular Prayer, and spend (in Charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a commerce that will never fail:<sup>116</sup>

(...) Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls, and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you, and ye shall not Be dealt with unjustly.<sup>117</sup>

(...) Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.<sup>118</sup>

O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury,- like those who spend their substance to be seen of men, but believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. They are in parable like a hard, barren rock, on which is a little soil: on it falls heavy rain, which leaves it (Just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guideth not those who reject faith.<sup>119</sup>

O ye who believe! Give of the good things which ye have (honourably) earned, and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you, and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad, in order that out of it ye may give away something, when ye yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of all wants, and worthy of all praise.<sup>120</sup>

Those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord; Establish regular prayers; spend, out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (eternal) home,.<sup>121</sup>

Behold, ye are those invited to spend (of your substance) in the Way of Allah: But among you are some that are niggardly. But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls. But Allah is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy. If ye turn back (from the Path), He will substitute in

<sup>116</sup> Al Qur'ān 35:29 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>117</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:272 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>118</sup> Al Qur'ān 8:60 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>119</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:264 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>120</sup> Al Qur'ān 2:267 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>121</sup> Al Qur'ān 13:22 Yusuf Ali.

your stead another people; then they would not be like you!<sup>122</sup>

The Qur'ān and the Ahadith contain many other verses advising the believers to refrain from excessive love of wealth or hoarding money. They instead stressed on them to spend to spend as much as possible in the way of the Lord, to help the kinsfolk, the poor, the orphans, the wayfarer and to manumit the slaves etc. God commanded the believers to seek his bounties without envying others blessed by Him.<sup>123</sup> He says:

The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whom He will.<sup>124</sup>

Instead of condemning the rich, or telling others to '*go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor*', the Holy Prophet (pbAh) preached the midway as quoted above.

Besides optional charity, the Holy Qur'ān also made it mandatory on the well to do believers to pay a fixed percentage of their wealth each year for the following purposes:

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.<sup>125</sup>

Economic policy of Islam is based on honest struggle to produce and earn one's living in accordance with one's potentials, capabilities and circumstances. The community, however, is based on the general principle of circulation of wealth among all the sects of society.

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<sup>122</sup> Al Qur'ān 47:38 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>123</sup> Al-Qur'ān 16:14, 17:66, 45:12.

<sup>124</sup> ibid 2:212.

<sup>125</sup> ibid 9:60.

Even the modern economists describe money as a flow. To keep it flowing, therefore, Islam despises the hoarding of wealth to avoid its stinking. It must continue flowing from one person to another and vice-versa so that it may not keep revolving merely around the rich members of the society. This golden principle to achieve the goal of full employment of all the factors of production for optimum production of wealth is the guarantee to avoid the vices such as recession, inflation, deflation and stagnation in the economy. God, therefore, suggested that:

(...) In order that it may not (merely) make a circuit between the wealthy among you. (...).<sup>126</sup>

Islam stressed again and again to avoid hoarding wealth as long as needy people exist in the society. Wealth must continue to circulate from the rich to the poor to create a classless society based on universal brotherhood of mankind, equality of rights and privileges of the members ensuring peace and happy life to each and every member of the community.

The readers will observe that by adopting the economic policy as suggested by Islam, there could be no possibility of people dying with hunger or there being people who are not provided even the minimum needs of their lives. No one in Islamic community can be left helpless to the extent that he may need to sell himself or his children. Due to constant flow of money in the society there cannot be a recession destroying the economy. In no case the blessing of the Lord i.e. the wealth can be used to exploit the poor or the needy. It was to this end that usury and interest has been declared not only unlawful but a war against the Lord and His Prophet (pbAh).

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<sup>126</sup> ibid 59:7.

## **Human Rights**

The readers of Qur'ān and Ahadith will observe that they deal entirely with حقوق الله (The Rights of the Almighty on People) and حقوق العباد (The Rights of human beings on each other). The stress on the human rights is also evident from the verses quoted earlier.

Although حقوق الله i.e. rights of the Almighty on human beings are of primary importance for the believers yet the Lord had enjoined on the believers the human rights in great detail. The Islamic Shariah describes human rights as حقوق العباد i.e. the human rights against each other. The human rights granted by the Almighty, therefore, supersede any other human rights granted by the kings, philosophers, reformers or won by the men or women through revolts, agitations or strikes etc. These rights are also not the outcome of human moral evolution or the result of human struggle or experience through the ages. Human rights in revealed religions and especially in Islam are blessings of the Creator for the benefit of humankind on earth. The Lord revealed the same through His messengers to different nations in the world. All the prophets of the Lord and the Almighty himself had been teaching the believers to be kind to their parents, to their wives, to the children, the friends, the neighbors and each and every person among the human species. Kind and courteous treatment with all human beings, feeding the poor and magnanimous treatment with them had always been counted as great virtues of the righteous people. All such deeds done to please the Lord are counted among the worship of the Almighty.

## **Human Sufferings in the Ancient Times**

In the beginning of the chapter, we referred to various types of human miseries inflicted on the poor and helpless people by the members of their own species. In

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this respect man has surpassed all carnivorous predators or the wild beasts. As regards enslavement or forced labor subjecting their own brethren to unspeakable tortures and degradation, no other living being can compete with man. Among thousands of other vices, therefore, slavery comes as the first institution which had been destroying justice, equity, courtesy, cooperation and other human considerations among the community. In order of its importance, therefore, we shall be focusing more on slavery in the book as compared to any other human condition in the world.

**Ch. 3-**

## SLAVERY

Different scholars have given varying definitions of slavery but due to shortage of space at our disposal, we cannot afford to quote the same here. To have a better understanding of the institution, however, we may quote simply from the Colliers Encyclopedia in the following:

The violent personal domination of powerless and dishonored persons who are denied rights accorded to other members of society by birth. Slavery is an ancient and universal institution, which has existed at every level of social development and among all races and peoples. It originates in and is sustained by force; in all known slave societies masters have had the power to punish their slaves physically. The most fundamental element of **the slave relationship is that the slave has no natal or communal rights**; he or she is a social isolate whose master controls and mediates all relationships with the wider community. **Lacking all social and legal rights**, the slave is not only powerless in relation to the master, but devoid of honor, however important his role might be. The slave is always a surrogate of the master, lacking recognized will or autonomy, socially and symbolically dead.<sup>127</sup>

The definition of slavery as per international law is contained in the following:

The legal definition of slavery in international law today is found at Article 1(1) of the 1926 Slavery Convention, which reads: 'Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.'<sup>128</sup>

## Slave Acquisition and Slave Trade

The various means by which men and women were initially enslaved differed in some respects from the ways in which they were acquired by their masters. Both were closely related to the slave-trading networks that arose to fulfill and promote

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<sup>127</sup> *Collier's Encyclopedia*, Ed by Lauren S. Bahr, Vol. 21 (New York: Macmillan Educational Company, 1992), s.v. 'slavery', p. 71-72.

<sup>128</sup> Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, (Edinburgh: University Press Ltd, 2015), p. 259.

demand for slave labor.... Persons became slaves in many ways, but usually through kidnapping, through becoming prisoners of war, through debt and poverty, as a penalty for crime, by birth, or by being traded into slavery as children. Kidnapping ranks as the most important means of enslavement. **Most persons who were ever enslaved were simply snatched from their homelands in raids organized for that purpose. This is true of the vast majority of the more than 9 million Africans who were shipped to the New World.** Whereas genuine prisoners were an important source for certain slave systems during special periods of intense international or tribal warfare, relatively few advanced societies enslaved their prisoners of war. Debt and poverty may have been the major reason for enslavement in the ancient Near East and most of the Southeast Asian countries Slavery as a penalty for crime is found mainly in primitive societies, a major exception being China.<sup>129</sup>

Slavery has been prevailing throughout the world from time immemorial yet no definite date can be ascribed to it. The earliest written reference about slavery is found in the book of Genesis wherein Noah inflicts curse on Canaan, son of Ham.<sup>130</sup> The next mention of slaves we find in the story of Abraham who had acquired many slaves at Haraan.<sup>131</sup> Genesis also reports about the slaves given to Abraham by the king of Egypt<sup>132</sup> and king Abimelech of Gerar.<sup>133</sup> It transpires from the above that the institution of slavery existed even earlier to the times of Abraham.

Although almost all the powerful nations or the people had been exploiting human beings by extorting maximum output from the forced labour or slaves yet we find no written records about any other nation before the Egyptians exploiting human labor and liberty on such a mass scale.<sup>134</sup> Only they had been making extensive use of the inexpensive labor to perform different services including cultivation of lands, building palaces,

<sup>129</sup> Collier's Encyclopedia, Vol. 21 s.v. 'slavery', p. 74-75.

<sup>130</sup> Gen 9:24-27.

<sup>131</sup> ibid 12:5.

<sup>132</sup> ibid 12:16.

<sup>133</sup> ibid 20:14.

<sup>134</sup> See Britannica, 15<sup>th</sup> Edn., 1982: MACROPAEDIA, 27:227, s.v 'servitude'; sub-heading 'The Ancient Near East'.

digging canals, doing different menial works and building Ahrams (Pyramids) of the Egyptian kings. Romans, perhaps, come next to the Egyptians to squeeze maximum output from an extremely large number of enslaved people in the ancient times.

In ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt slaves were mainly captured aliens who were rarely used productively except in the households of the upper classes.<sup>135</sup>

## Slavery in Egypt

Nothing can be said about the time of the origin of slavery in Egypt. Historians like Herodotus believe that the great Pyramid at Giza completed about 2556 BC involved hard labor of 100,000 slaves whipped and driven for 20 years.

That the slaves were the lowest class in Egypt has been described in the following:

Until the time of the New Kingdom<sup>136</sup>, peasants made up the lowest class in Egypt. Then, during the New Kingdom's wars of conquest, thousands of slaves were brought to Egypt from Asia and Nubia, a land to the south of Egypt.

The most fortunate slaves worked in the homes of the rich. They performed every kind of service for their wealthy masters – giving them baths, combing their hair, cooking meals, watching their children, feeding their cattle. Through loyal service to a priest or noble, house slaves could hope someday to be granted their freedom.

Other slaves were not so lucky. Whole families of slaves were sent into the mountains of Upper Egypt to work in the gold mines. Often they felt the stinging lash of the overseer's whip. Men, women, and children dropped from exhaustion. According to one account:

*There is no forgiveness or relaxation at all for the sick, or the maimed, or the old ... but all with blows are compelled to stick to their labor until, worn out, they die in their servitude.*<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> ibid p. 72.

<sup>136</sup> New Kingdom (1570-1075 BC).

<sup>137</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, *World History, Perspectives on the Past*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Evanston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1997), p. 66.

Such reports, therefore, form the evidence to the fact that even during the prehistoric periods, rich and powerful human beings have been inflicting unspeakable tortures on the members of their own species. Human beings were, therefore, the inventors of the institution of slavery due to which the rich and powerful members of the society continued to exploit the weaker and poor people among them. The malady cannot be apologized by pointing finger at the people of the ancient times being undermined as uncivilized people simply because even the most advanced and civilized nation in the world are no different from them till today.

The Israelites in Egypt had a short duration of time to enjoy freedom or to derive benefits from the lands given to them by the king during the time of Joseph son of Jacob. Sometime after the death of Joseph, however, they were enslaved by the new king who deprived them of the land, their possessions and the liberty. They, therefore, remained subject to cruel slavery of the Egyptians for about 450 years. The Old Testament narrates the plight of the Israelites under the pharaoh:

Then, a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. He said to his people, "These Israelites are so numerous and strong that they are a threat to us. In case of war they might join our enemies in order to fight against us, and might escape from the country. We must find some way to keep them from becoming even more numerous." So the Egyptians put slave drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labor. The Israelites built the cities of Pithom and Rameses to serve as supply centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more they increased in number and the farther they spread through the land. The Egyptians came to fear the Israelites and made their lives miserable by forcing them into cruel slavery. They made them work on their building projects and in their fields, and they had no pity on them. Then the king of Egypt spoke to Shiphrah and Puah, the two midwives who helped the Hebrew women. When you help the Hebrew women give birth," he said to them, "kill the baby if it is a boy; but if it is a girl, let it live." But the midwives were God-fearing and so did not obey the king; instead, they let the boys live.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Exo 1:8-17 GNB.

The pharaoh had subjected the Israelites to such a discriminative and cruel treatment that even the Qur'ān refer to it in a disapproving tone:

Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief.<sup>139</sup>

Maulana Maoududi has commented that:

Pharaoh did not rule his subjects with an even hand, giving equal rights to all; instead, he divided his subjects into various groups. He gave more rights and powers to some and enslaved, crushed and exploited others.

The Maulana further writes that in the system of Pharaoh:

**No member of the enslaved groups could ever aspire to join the ruling classes.**<sup>140</sup> Instead, human beings were permanently divided into the rulers and the ruled; a system in which some were not granted even basic human, let alone political and legal, rights. In fact, some were even denied the rights to live! In that system there were no guarantees for the enslaved: all benefits and privileges, all material favours, all ranks were set apart for the ruling class, not because of any merit but simply on grounds of their birth.<sup>141</sup>

Such treatment with slaves was not, however, peculiar to the pharaoh. Slaves and the vanquished people used to be treated with extreme brutality not only in Egypt but also in other regions of the world and especially throughout the Roman Empire from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to the end of the Western Roman Empire.

<sup>139</sup> Al-Qur'ān 28:4 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>140</sup> From the very beginning, Islam has been freeing and assimilating the slaves as their own kith and kin. Many ex-slaves even became great rulers of the world. A short reference to the same is found under the topic '*Universal Brotherhood of Islam*' in chapter 8 '*Moral Revolution of Islam*'.

<sup>141</sup> Towards Understanding the Qur'ān Zafar Ishaq Ansari, eng. Tr. Of Tafheem-ul-Qur'ān, by Maulana Maududi, (verse 28:4), vol. 7, p. 195-196... .

The Pentateuch, Joshua and Judges make repeated mention of the bondage of Israelites in Egypt.<sup>142</sup> It is, however, an astonishing factor that the Israelites did not learn any lesson from the cruelties perpetrated on them. During the post exodus period, their behavior with the weaker people was worse than they suffered at the hands of the Egyptians. Instead of being thankful to the Lord, they chose to be more and more arrogant against Him. The OT has ample record of their repeated refusal to surrender before the will of God. Instead of humble submission and obedience to the commandments of the Lord, they pretended to be the chosen people of God immune from the obligations towards the Lord and their accountability in the hereafter.

The pride and arrogance of the Israelites continued to increase with every new victory and success up to the end of the exodus and thereafter. With the passage of time, the Israelites became more and more intolerant of other people in the land. The same is evident from their inhuman cruelties inflicted on the Midianites, the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Edomites and many other original occupants of the lands in the region. Besides the massacre of the defeated people they also demolished all the buildings and put on fire everything in their cities. The survivors, if any, were enslaved. In this respect, the Israelites had been the first people in the history to pretend that they were committing all such inhuman activities under the commandment of the almighty. The brutalities of the Israelites against other nations, therefore, far exceeded other nations before them.

## **Instances of the Atrocities of the Israelites**

Claiming themselves to be chosen and the only people of LORD, the Israelites considered themselves justified to inflict all sorts of cruelties, torture and atrocities on other nations in the world. Deuteronomy provided them the law to act in that manner:

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<sup>142</sup> Ex 1:14, 2:23, 6:5-6,9, 13:3,14, 20:2. For other references please see Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges etc.

**1.** When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; **2.** And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: **3** Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. **4.** For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.<sup>143</sup>

Genocide of people has been sanctioned in the following:

**10.** When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. **11.** And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. **12.** And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it: **13.** And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: **14.** But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. **15.** Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. **16.** But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: **17.** But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: **18.** That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.<sup>144</sup>

During their actual practice, however, the Israelites went far beyond the instructions of the Lord to inflict all type of brutalities on the vanquished nations. An observer records that:

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<sup>143</sup> Deu 7:1-4 KJV.

<sup>144</sup> ibid 20:10-18 KJV.

The revolting atrocities which characterized the conduct of the Jews tend to show that they were largely under the sway of a wild and aimless fanaticism, and if they had any settled purpose it apparently consisted in a resolve to exterminate their Gentile fellow-citizens, and **to found an independent Jewish state amid the desolation they had created. In the island of Cyprus alone the Jews put two hundred and forty thousand of the native population to death, and in Cyrene on the African coast more than two hundred thousand Greeks and Romans were brutally massacred.** In both of these provinces it is probable that the Jews outnumbered the rest of the inhabitants. After the revolt was quelled Cyrene had to be re-colonized. **Whenever the Jews obtained the mastery, they behaved like hordes of Cannibals, eating the flesh of their victims and smearing themselves with their blood.**<sup>145</sup>

A cursory glance over the history of the Israelites may uphold veracity of the observation.

**1. During the exodus**, the Israelites had confrontation with the Canaanites at Horma. They prayed to the LORD for their success. The event has been reported in the following:

The LORD heard them and helped them conquer the Canaanites. So the Israelites completely destroyed them and their cities, and named the place Hormah.<sup>146</sup>

**2. Subsequently, the Israelites** also attacked the Army of King Og of Bashan:

**34.** The LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him. I will give you victory over him, all his people, and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon, the Amorite king who ruled at Heshbon." **35.** So the Israelites killed Og, his sons, and all his people, leaving no survivors, and then they occupied his land.<sup>147</sup>

The same event has been described in different words in the Deuteronomy.

We destroyed all the towns and put to death all the men, women, and children, just as we did in the towns that belonged to King Sihon of Heshbon. We took the livestock and

<sup>145</sup> W. D. Morrison, *The Jews Under the Roman rule*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885), p. 192-193.

<sup>146</sup> Num 21:3 GNB. Hormah means "broken rock", "banned", or "devoted to destruction".

<sup>147</sup> Num 21:34-35 GNB.

plundered the towns.<sup>148</sup>

### 3. Holy War Against Midian.

According to the book of Numbers:

The LORD said to Moses, "Punish the Midianites for what they did to the people of Israel. After you have done that, you will die." (...) They attacked Midian, as the LORD had commanded Moses, and killed all the men, including the five kings of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. They also killed Balaam son of Beor. The people of Israel captured the Midianite women and children, took their cattle and their flocks, plundered all their wealth, and burned all their cities and camps. They took all the loot that they had captured, including the prisoners and the animals, and brought them to Moses and Eleazar and to the community of the people of Israel, who were at the camp on the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho.<sup>149</sup>

Moses became angry with the officers, the commanders of battalions and companies, who had returned from the war. He asked them, "Why have you kept all the women alive? Remember that it was the women who followed Balaam's instructions and at Peor led the people to be unfaithful to the LORD. That was what brought the epidemic on the LORD's people. So now kill every boy and kill every woman who has had sexual intercourse, but keep alive for yourselves all the girls and all the women who are virgins.<sup>150</sup>

The following is a list of what was captured by the soldiers, in addition to what they kept for themselves: 675,000 sheep and goats, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys, and 32,000 virgins.<sup>151</sup>

### 4. Fall of Jericho:

The Israelites besieged the city of Jericho for 7 days when its walls collapsed miraculously.

**21.** With their swords they killed everyone in the city, men and women, young and old. They also killed the cattle, sheep, and donkeys. (...) **24.** Then they set fire to the city and burned it to the ground, along with everything in it, except the things made of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, which they took and put in the LORD's treasury.<sup>152</sup>

### 5. The LORD had promised Joshua to give the city of Ai to the Israelites. God said:

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<sup>148</sup> Deu 3:6-7 GNB.

<sup>149</sup> Num 31:1-2 & 7-12 GNB.

<sup>150</sup> ibid 31:14-18 GNB.

<sup>151</sup> Num 31:32-35 GNB.

<sup>152</sup> Jos 6:21 and 24 GNB.

**8.** After you have taken the city, set it on fire, just as the LORD has commanded. These are your orders." (...) **22.** The Israelites in the city now came down to join the battle. So the men of Ai found themselves completely surrounded by Israelites, and they were all killed. No one got away, and no one lived through it. **23.** except the king of Ai. He was captured and taken to Joshua. **24.** The Israelites killed every one of the enemy in the barren country where they had chased them. Then they went back to Ai and killed everyone there. **25.** Joshua kept his spear pointed at Ai and did not put it down until every person there had been killed. The whole population of Ai was killed that day---twelve thousand men and women. **26.** (SEE 8:25) **27.** The Israelites kept for themselves the livestock and goods captured in the city, as the LORD had told Joshua. **28.** Joshua burned Ai and left it in ruins. It is still like that today. **29.** He hanged the king of Ai from a tree and left his body there until evening. At sundown Joshua gave orders for the body to be removed, and it was thrown down at the entrance to the city gate. They covered it with a huge pile of stones, which is still there today.<sup>153</sup>

## **6. Everlasting Slavery of the Gibeonites** The Gibeonites were spared their lives due to the promise of the leaders of Israel with them.

**26.** So this is what Joshua did: he protected them and did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. **27.** But at the same time he made them slaves, to cut wood and carry water for the people of Israel and for the LORD's altar. To this day they have continued to do this work in the place where the LORD has chosen to be worshiped.<sup>154</sup>

## **7. Joshua Had Captured Five Amorite Kings**

**26.** Then Joshua killed the kings and hanged them on five trees, where their bodies stayed until evening.<sup>155</sup>

## **8. Joshua Captures More Amorite Territory**

**28.** Joshua attacked and captured Makkedah and its king that day. He put everyone in the city to death; no one was left alive. He did to the king of Makkedah what he had done to the king of Jericho. **29.** After this, Joshua and his army went on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. **30.** The LORD also gave the Israelites victory over this city and its king. They spared no one, but killed every person in it. They did to the king what they had done to the king of Jericho. **31.** After this, Joshua and his army went on from Libnah to Lachish,

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<sup>153</sup> ibid 8:8 & 22-29.

<sup>154</sup> ibid 9:26-27.

<sup>155</sup> ibid 10:26.

surrounded it and attacked it. **32.** The LORD gave the Israelites victory over Lachish on the second day of the battle. Just as they had done at Libnah, they spared no one, but killed every person in the city. **33.** King Horam of Gezer came to the aid of Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army and left none of them alive. **34.** Next, Joshua and his army went on from Lachish to Eglon, surrounded it and attacked it. **35.** They captured it the same day and put everyone there to death, just as they had done at Lachish. **36.** After this, Joshua and his army went from Eglon up into the hills to Hebron, attacked it **37.** and captured it. They killed the king and everyone else in the city as well as in the nearby towns. Joshua condemned the city to total destruction, just as he had done to Eglon. No one in it was left alive. **38.** Then Joshua and his army turned back to Debir and attacked it. **39.** He captured it, with its king and all the nearby towns. They put everyone there to death. Joshua did to Debir and its king what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king. **40.** Joshua conquered the whole land. He defeated the kings of the hill country, the eastern slopes, and the western foothills, as well as those of the dry country in the south. He spared no one; everyone was put to death. This was what the LORD God of Israel had commanded. **41.** Joshua's campaign took him from Kadesh Barnea in the south to Gaza near the coast, including all the area of Goshen, and as far north as Gibeon.<sup>156</sup>

It was, perhaps, for the first time in the history of human beings that the Israelites managed to invent and to insert certain special commandments in the Old Testament to justify their atrocities.<sup>157</sup> To establish the superiority of their race and special privileges attached with the same, they also introduced certain curses from prophets like Noah (pbAh), Abraham (pbAh), Isaac (pbAh) and others. They, as such, had moral as well as legal justification to plunder, to enslave or to destroy the enemies of Israel.

Although the Lord had been reminding the Israelites again and again not to forget that they had been slaves

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<sup>156</sup> ibid 10:28-41.

<sup>157</sup> To cover all their inhuman or unjustified cruelties, the Jews invoked divine commandments of their own making. It was, therefore, the self-service of Israel that painted the loving creator, sustainer and evolver of the living beings as a moral monster than the compassionate God of all the people in the world.

under the Egyptians yet they had been proud enough to assert their dominance and superiority against all other people in the world. In and around Canaan, therefore, they continued to commit worse types of barbarities with the people defeated by them. Due to their persistent arrogance throughout 1300 years of their stay in Canaan, the Lord had been chastising them for their inequities from time to time. As an overall view of their condition, we can say that they had to remain under the heel of one or the other nation alternately.

Ever since the occupation of major parts of Canaan, the Israelites remained at dagger's drawn with the philistines and other nations in Canaan. The narrative thereafter, takes a turn with the Israelites themselves becoming target of sufferings and miseries inflicted by others. After enjoying a short period of power and prosperity at Jerusalem, they themselves became the worst sufferers at the hands of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans who paid them in their own coin through wide-spread massacre, arsonage, destruction of cities, enslavement of the Jews and their deportation to far off regions from the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC to 200 AD. Their sufferings had, therefore, been well-earned reward of their own doings. For studies of human miseries, therefore, we shall be taking up Jerusalem as an exemplary case representing human miseries in many other cities or places in the world. Further details about human sufferings and genocide, will be provided in our chapters on Colonization of the New World, Australia, thousands of islands and many other places in the world.

## **Universal existence of slavery**

To depict world wide existence of slavery we shall be quoting from a scholar in the following:

No Great Nation of antiquity, of which any accounts have come down to us, seems to have been wholly without a servile class. The venerable history of mankind, recorded in the Old Testament, represents to us a condition of absolute bondage, as recognized, at a very early period, both in Asia and in Egypt. Slavery existed in every part of Greece; and may be

traced, in the remains of all those states into which Italy was divided, anterior to the foundation of Rome.<sup>158</sup>

It has been said that:

Rome. It is in Rome that slavery reached its highest point of development in the ancient world. Household slavery is in evidence from earliest times, and by the time of the Punic Wars (264-146 B.C.) slavery was probably already an important economic institution. The wars furthered its growth, dislocating the traditional agricultural system and making possible the large-scale monopolization of rural lands by the Roman upper classes. It also made available the slave labor into latifundia (large estates), which had been the invention of the Carthaginians.<sup>159</sup>

It was in the Roman State that military action – in Greece often purposeless and, except in the resistance to Persia, on the whole fruitless – worked out the social mission which formed its true justification. **Hence at Rome slavery also most properly found its place, so long as that mission was in progress of accomplishment.**<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> William Blair, *The State of Slavery Amongst the Romans* (Michigan: Thomas Clark, Law Bookseller), p. 1.

<sup>159</sup> Collier's Encyclopedia, Vol. 21 s.v. 'slavery', p. 73.

<sup>160</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 773.



**Ch. 4-**

## PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

In the entire history of man, we find no other nation having a long history of persecution like the Israelites. We have already given a short account of the sufferings of the Israelites at Egypt covering about 450 years before the Exodus. The Bible itself provides a detailed account of the miseries the Israelites had to face during 40 years of their wanderings in the deserts of Sinai and the adjoining areas before entering the Holy Land. In spite of their boastful assertions, the Israelites did not enjoy comfortable or enviable status in the world except during the reigns of King David and Solomon. Subsequently, with the division of the kingdom between the northern and southern tribes, the Israelites ceased to be any powerful nation in the region. They had to suffer at the hands of various invaders during 750 BC to 135 AD when the Romans utterly destroyed Jerusalem, the temple and annihilated all the people of Israel except for those who had escaped earlier to the siege of Jerusalem.

During all the periods mentioned above, Jerusalem had been the center of the power, religious influence and culture of Israel. Jerusalem can, therefore, be taken as the best representative of the persecution of the nation for about 900 years before the final dispersal of Israel.

### **Jerusalem**

Jerusalem had been known by various names most famous among which were '*Jeru Salem*', Shalem, or Salim and Zion. The Wikipedia records that:

The name "Jerusalem" is variously etymologized to mean "foundation" (Sumerian *yeru*, 'settlement'/Semitic *qry* 'to found, to lay a cornerstone') of the god Shalem", the god Shalem was thus the original tutelary deity of the Bronze Age city.

'*Shalem*' or '*Salem*' also denoted peace due to which Jerusalem could be interpreted as the city of peace.

## **Human Sufferings in Canaan and Jerusalem**

In contrast to its name, Jerusalem had been among the most disturbed sites in the world. No other human abode on earth had been subjected to repeated destruction, arsonage and massacre of the population by the foreign invaders as fell to the lot of Jerusalem. The city had seen numerous invaders during the times of the Israelites. The Israelites rarely enjoyed any long term peace in the city after the reign of king Solomon up to 135 AD when they stood eliminated from Jerusalem as well as the Holy Land. Even after the Jewish extermination from the city, Jerusalem never had a long time of peace except during the Muslim rule from 637 AD to 1099 AD and 1187 AD to 1917 AD. The intervention of the western powers led to establishment of the Israelite state in the Holy Land making Jerusalem a bone of contention between the three extant religions of the book. Skipping over many details of the past and present, we shall be recounting some of the most important periods of trouble and turbulence in Canaan and Jerusalem after the reign of King Solomon.

Sheshik, the Pharaoh of Egypt captured and pillaged Jerusalem in 850 BC i.e. just about five years after the death of Solomon. Later on the city was sacked by philistines, Arabs and Ethiopians who looted king Jehoram's house and carried off all his family except for his youngest son, Jehoahaz. In 786 B.C. Jehoahaz plundered the city and destroyed its walls besides taking Amaziah<sup>161</sup> of Judah as a prisoner. Tigleth Pilsar III (r. 745-727) and Shalmaneser V, (r. 727-722) had been oppressing and destroying parts of the northern kingdom of Israel during their reigns. Ultimately, Sargon II (r. 722-705) conquered entire area under the northern tribes and deported most of the Jews to far off lands in Assyria and towards the Caspian Sea.

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<sup>161</sup> Amaziah was King of Judah (r. 796-767 BCE).

Subsequently, Nebuchadnezzar devastated the city of Jerusalem, and its temple in 597. The new king Jeconiah (who was either eight or eighteen at the time), his court, prominent citizens craftsmen and much of the Jewish population of Judah numbering about 10,000 were deported to Babylon. "*None remained except the poorest people of the land*" and that also taken to Babylon were the treasures and furnishings of the Temple, including golden vessels dedicated by King Solomon. (2Kings Ch. 24)

## **The Babylonian Exile of the Israelites**

In about 589 B.C. King Zedekiah of Jerusalem entered into an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra and revolted against Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar responded immediately by invading Judah. The entire chapter 52 of Jeremiah is devoted to the description of the abomination of desolation caused by plunder, destruction of the temple, massive assassination of the citizens and razing all the buildings in Jerusalem to ground. Besides arsonage, Nebuchadnezzar also took away 70,000 of the Israelites as captives of war to Babylonia to serve there as slaves. Only a small number of vinedressers and husbandmen were permitted to remain in the land.

About 70 years later, it was the second generation of the Jews deported to Babylonia whom Cyrus the great released from slavery, allowed them to return to Palestine and to enjoy their rights as free citizens in their native lands in accordance with the religion and culture of Israel. Cyrus also returned to the Israelites all the golden vessels and other relics so that they may rebuild the temple of their God. The temple stood completed by 515 B.C. Ezra then started rehearsing and reviving the law and the rituals of the Israelites. It was due to his efforts that the traditions and culture of Israel stood revived properly. About more than a century

thereafter i.e. in 350 B.C. Artaxerxes III<sup>162</sup> burnt down Jerusalem and sent the Jews to Hyrcania on the Caspian Sea.

Keeping in view the fact that Jerusalem had been the heart of the Israelites since the times of David and Solomon, their deportation to far off lands from their nativity and the beloved sanctuary was severest of the punishments than total elimination of the Israelites. In this respect, Jews had always been the worst sufferers in the world. They loved Jerusalem more than anything else. Even during their exile to Babylonia, the Jews never ceased to remember Jerusalem fervently. The verses quoted below allude to the same:

**5.** If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. **6.** If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. **7.** Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. **8.** O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. **9.** Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.<sup>163</sup>

Jerusalem had, therefore, enjoyed an idolized veneration from the Jews.

## **Jerusalem Under the Greeks**

Slavery among the Greeks existed since an unknown period of history. It is said that enslavement of Greeks for non payment of debt continued in most Greek states, it was banned temporarily in Athens under Solon (638-558 BC) in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Under the Athenian democracy established ca 508 BC slavery came to be used on a scale seen never before that among the Greeks. There had been massive concentration of slaves near the silver mines at Laureaun - a major vein of silver bearing ore was found there in 483 BC.<sup>164</sup> Nobody ever raised any objection against slavery.

<sup>162</sup> c. 425 BC – 338 BC. Great King (Shah) of Persia and the first Pharaoh of the 31st dynasty of Egypt.

<sup>163</sup> Psa 137:5-8 KJV.

<sup>164</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Barbarian'.

The Persian Empire founded by Cyrus in 538 B.C. lasted for about 206 years. In about 333-332 B.C. Alexander the Great marched towards Jerusalem where the high priest and the citizens welcomed him like their own king. Alexander himself greeted the priesthood with due respect and responded graciously to the cordiality of the citizens. He went to the temple and made sacrifice to the God of the Israelites and ensured peaceful life at Jerusalem. The following quotation may provide us with the background of the asylum provided to the city and its people.

Now, says the historian, when the Phoenicians and Chaldeans that followed Alexander thought that they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, the very reverse happened, for the young leader, when he saw the multitude in the distance, and the figure of the high priest before, approached him by himself, saluted him, and adored the name, which was graven upon the plate of the mitre. Then a captain named Parmenio asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews. To whom the leader replied: "I do not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians." Then when Alexander had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city, and he offered sacrifice to God in the Temple, according to the high-priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. He granted all the multitude desired.<sup>165</sup>

After Jerusalem, Alexander proceeded to conquer various other lands including Babylonia where he established principles of imperial government which continued to be followed by his Greek successors and even by subsequent emperors of Rome and Byzantine. **The great work of Alexander was to make Greek civilization dominant among the conquered people** and ever since his time Greek civilization had its long

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<sup>165</sup> Story of the Nations, Jews, (London: 1885), p. 60-61.

lasting impact over Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt etc. till 638 AD when the Muslims took over Palestine from the Byzantines.

## **Alexander and the Hellenization of the Conquered Land**

Alexander the Great was the first person who made earnest and conscious efforts to infuse the Hellenistic art, culture and language in the lands subdued by him. Abba Eban observes that:

Nowhere is the role of conquest as the vehicle of cultural transmission more evident than in the career of Alexander the Great. For this fourth-century conqueror, although born in Pella, was also a child of Athens; his tutor, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) had studied for twenty years at Plato's academy in Athens and after eight years at Pella would return to Athens when Alexander launched his Persian campaign. Alexander, it is apparent, was well aware of his cultural mission..... He consciously planted the seeds of Hellenism throughout the lands he conquered.<sup>166</sup>

Hellenization of the conquered land had been the matter of prime importance behind all the conquests of Alexander the great. Infusion of Greek culture and civilization by Alexander and his followers, therefore, had an everlasting effect on the eastern Mediterranean region, in the Romans and even in the modern western world.

It has also been stated that:

His conquests are of the utmost importance because they involved the spread of Greek ideas and Greek culture generally, and this to an extent that cannot be overestimated. These ideas formed the basis of the eastern Mediterranean culture which Rome took over from the second century B.C. onwards. This became the basis of the Roman civilization, and in turn it has formed the framework of our modern western world.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> HERITAGE: Civilization & the Jews, Abba Eban, (Summit Books New York) Pg. 67, 68.

<sup>167</sup> Norman H. Snaith, *The Jews from Cyrus to Herod*, (Gateway Books of a Religious Knowledge, Surrey 1956), p. 22-23

**Alexander can also be taken as the first colonizer in the world.** It was primary ambition of Alexander to bring a cultural change in all territories conquered by him. He founded many new settlements after his name. Besides this, the veterans retiring from military services have also been settling among the local people in various lands. Here is an interesting report about the same:

The veterans settled where they were discharged, married native women, and raised their families. But each settlement was modeled on the Greek pattern, a small cameo of Greece in a barbarian land. By this means a common culture was established from east to west and down into Egypt, and it was a Greek culture. It came about, therefore, that even though Alexander's empire broke up into many pieces at his death, yet every piece was Greek. It mattered not whether Syrian or Egyptian ruled in Palestine, for both Syrians and Egyptians were apostles of the Greek way of life.<sup>168</sup>

## **Deportation and Dispersion of the Jews**

It was perhaps due to the guidance or teachings of Aristotle that Alexander decided to break the intense cohesion of the Jewish race. He and his marshals embarked on a well-considered plan of emigration from Judea on an extensive scale. For precedence they had before them the traditions of Tiglath-Pileser (740 BC). He had ravaged many of the towns in the northern Kingdom. Besides plundering and assassinating, most of the inhabitants, he deported the Israelites to far off lands as slaves. Sargon II (722 BC), utterly destroyed what remained of the ten tribes of the Israelites in the north, and exiled the survivors to other lands as mentioned earlier. Such deportees never had a chance to return to their native lands. Consequent upon Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem (587-586 BC), many of the deportees to Babylonia settled there while some dispersed to certain other lands. A substantial number of the exiled Jews or their descendants, however, returned to Jerusalem under

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<sup>168</sup> ibid, p. 23

decree of freedom granted by Cyrus the great after the exile period of about 70 years. Nothing is known about the people taken away by Artaxerxes III (350 BC). Anyhow, the presence of a large number of Jews in other parts of Africa and Asia may have been caused due to the same policy of dispersal of the Jews during different periods of time. Leaving aside Alexandria, a large number of Jews have been reported living in Cyrene about which we learn that:

Cyrene, another town in the north of Africa, contained many Jews, and there are traces of Jewish settlements all along the southern coasts of the Mediterranean. According to Josephus and the Acts of the apostles there were Jews in Crete and Cyprus, and St. Paul in his wanderings found Jewish synagogues in all the important cities of Greece. Jewish inscriptions have been discovered in Athens, and Jewish colonists even dwelt in the small islands which are dotted over the Aegean Sea.<sup>169</sup>

Whether it was due to forcible deportation or voluntary emigration from Palestine, there had been many Jewish settlements in Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Coelo, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Bithynia and parts of Asia Minor. In Europe the Jews had their settlements in Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, and Corinth etc. Aside from the continents the Jews formed a conspicuous part of the islands such as Euboea, Cyprus and Crete. It is said that due to deportation by Sargon II followed by others the Jews had become so numerous in Syria that at the time of Great War with Rome 10 to 18 thousand Jews were massacred in Damascus alone.

Much later than the deportations by Sargon II, Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great and his successors, Pompeii the Roman general also followed the same strategy of dispersion of the Jews. Pompey and Titus carried off many Jewish captives to Rome itself where they started forming colonies inhabited exclusively by the Jewish immigrants. An immense Jewish population inhabited Antioch, the Syrian capital. As such, many parts of the provinces of Asia Minor were densely populated with the Jews. They therefore had

<sup>169</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 382.

their synagogues at Bithynia, Phrygia, Lydia and Pontius and even in Crimea.

## **Seleucids' Rule over the Holy Land**

Alexander died in 323 BC at Babylon without leaving any obvious or legitimate heirs. His empire was, therefore, divided into four power blocks. One of his generals i.e. Seleucus I Nicator (r. 320-281 BC) became the ruler of Mesopotamia, Iran parts of India and central Asia which included Syria, Palestine and modern Kwait etc. Seleucus I Nicator also followed the policy of Hellenization of the East within his Empire. He founded 16 cities in the honor of his father Antiochus. Antioch on the river Orontis was the most famous among them.

## **The Worst Tyrant among the Greeks**

Antiochus IV Epiphanes succeeded to the throne in his own turn in about 175 BC and his reign ended in 163 BC. He had no scruples of Alexander the great nor did he care a fig for the God of Israel. Unification of the subjects and Hellenization of all the people within his empire was the primary mission of Epiphanes. To implement the policy vigorously, he started severe persecution of the Jews including abrogation of their law, profanity of the temple and strict ban on their religious rites. Due to resistance from the Jews, Antiochus IV made vigorous efforts to eliminate or to harmonize Judaism with Hellenistic civilization at any cost. For this he went up to the extent of destroying everything causing hindrance to the infusion of the Greek culture, language or faith. Consequently while returning from his successful invasion of Egypt in 169 B.C.E. he looted the Jerusalem temple. City walls were torn down and citadels were constructed over against the temple enclosure.

It was due to such actions of Antiochus IV that Jason the ex-high priest at Jerusalem led a revolt against the Seleucids. Antiochus took no time to give a full measure of chastisement to the rebellious as detailed below:

Raging like a wild animal he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In a space of three days 80 thousand were lost, 40 thousand meeting a violent death and the same number being sold into slavery.<sup>170</sup>

Besides committing various profanities in the temple, Antiochus entered the holiest places in the temple, took away all the sacred vessels along with 1800 talents of gold from the temple.<sup>171</sup> Edwyn Beven the author of 'Jerusalem Under the High Priests' reports that:-

It is difficult for us to realize the Horror which such a profanation would send through the Jewish people, the appalling insistence with which the question would rack them. Why, why the Lord did not defend His own sanctuary? "Wherefore do the heathen say, Where is now thy God?" There were no angels who confronted Antiochus when he went into the Holy Place and took "the golden altar and the candle stick of the light, the table of the shewbread, and the cups to pour withal, and the bowls, and the golden censers, and the Veil, and the crowns, and scaled off the adorning of gold which was on the face of the Temple." It was the sense of abandonment by its God, which made the bitterness of the anguish to the heart of Israel.<sup>172</sup>

It has also been recorded that:

Out of hatred for the Jewish citizens the King sent Apollonius commander of the Mysians and the head of an army of 22000 men, with orders to kill all the grown men and sell the women and young men into slavery. When this man arrived in Jerusalem he pretended to be peacefully disposed and waited until the Holy day of the Sabbath, then finding the Jews refraining from work he ordered his men to parade fully armed. All those who came out to watch he massacred, and running through the city with armed men, he cut down a large number of the people.<sup>173</sup>

But Judas Maccabeus and about nine others withdrew to the wilderness, where he and his companions lived like wild animals in the hills, continuing to eat what grew wild to avoid

<sup>170</sup> 2Macc. 5:12-14.

<sup>171</sup> ibid 5:15-23.

<sup>172</sup> Edwyn Beven, *Jerusalem Under the High Priests*, (London: Edward Arnold and Co. 1904) p. 81-82.

<sup>173</sup> 2Macc. 5:23b-26.

sharing the defilement.<sup>174</sup>

Meanwhile, King Antiochus continued to desecrate the temple by various means. Besides abolishing the Jewish law, he also passed many other regulations to eliminate Jewish customs and traditions of the Old. He forced the Jews to eat pork. **On refusal to eat pork, Eleazar, a ninety year old scribe was martyred cruelly in presence of many other Jews.**<sup>175</sup> The most tragic was the case of martyrdom of a mother along with her seven sons as quoted below:

#### **Martyrdom of a Mother and Her Seven Sons**

**1.** It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law. **2.** One of the brothers, speaking for the others, said: "What do you expect to learn by questioning us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors." **3.** At that the king, in a fury, gave orders to have pans and cauldrons heated. **4.** These were quickly heated, and he gave the order to cut out the tongue of the one who had spoken for the others, to scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of his brothers and his mother looked on. **5.** When he was completely maimed but still breathing, the king ordered them to carry him to the fire and fry him. As a cloud of smoke spread from the pan, the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, with these words: **6.** "The Lord God is looking on and truly has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song, when he openly bore witness, saying, 'And God will have compassion on his servants.' **7.** After the first brother had died in this manner, they brought the second to be made sport of. After tearing off the skin and hair of his head, they asked him, "Will you eat the pork rather than have your body tortured limb by limb?" **8.** Answering in the language of his ancestors, he said, "Never!" So he in turn suffered the same tortures as the first. **9.** With his last breath he said: "You accursed fiend, you are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to live again forever, because we are dying for his laws." **10.** After him the third suffered their cruel sport. He put forth his tongue at once when told to do so, and bravely stretched out his hands, **11.** as he spoke these noble words: "It was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of his laws I

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<sup>174</sup> ibid 5:27.

<sup>175</sup> ibid 6:18-28.

disregard them; from him I hope to receive them again.” **12.** Even the king and his attendants marveled at the young man’s spirit, because he regarded his sufferings as nothing. **13** After he had died, they tortured and maltreated the fourth brother in the same way. **14.** When he was near death, he said, “It is my choice to die at the hands of mortals with the hope that God will restore me to life; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.” **15.** They next brought forward the fifth brother and maltreated him. **16.** Looking at the king, he said: “Mortal though you are, you have power over human beings, so you do what you please. But do not think that our nation is forsaken by God. **17.** Only wait, and you will see how his great power will torment you and your descendants.” **18.** After him they brought the sixth brother. When he was about to die, he said: “Have no vain illusions. We suffer these things on our own account, because we have sinned against our God; that is why such shocking things have happened. **19.** Do not think, then, that you will go unpunished for having dared to fight against God.” **20.** Most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother who, seeing her seven sons perish in a single day, bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord. **21.** Filled with a noble spirit that stirred her womanly reason with manly emotion, she exhorted each of them in the language of their ancestors with these words: **22.** “I do not know how you came to be in my womb; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor was it I who arranged the elements you are made of. **23.** Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shaped the beginning of humankind and brought about the origin of everything, he, in his mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of his law.” **24.** Antiochus, suspecting insult in her words, thought he was being ridiculed. As the youngest brother was still alive, the king appealed to him, not with mere words, but with promises on oath, to make him rich and happy if he would abandon his ancestral customs: he would make him his Friend and entrust him with high office. **25.** When the youth paid no attention to him at all, the king appealed to the mother, urging her to advise her boy to save his life. **26.** After he had urged her for a long time, she agreed to persuade her son. **27.** She leaned over close to him and, in derision of the cruel tyrant, said in their native language: “Son, have pity on me, who carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought you up, educated and supported you to your present age. **28.** I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that God did not make them out of existing things. In the same way humankind came into existence. **29.** Do not be afraid of this executioner, but be worthy of your

brothers and accept death, so that in the time of mercy I may receive you again with your brothers." **30.** She had scarcely finished speaking when the youth said: "What is the delay? I will not obey the king's command. I obey the command of the law given to our ancestors through Moses. **31.** But you, who have contrived every kind of evil for the Hebrews, will not escape the hands of God. **32.** We, indeed, are suffering because of our sins. **33.** Though for a little while our living Lord has been angry, correcting and chastising us, he will again be reconciled with his servants. **34.** But you, wretch, most vile of mortals, do not, in your insolence, buoy yourself up with unfounded hopes, as you raise your hand against the children of heaven. **35.** You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty and all-seeing God. **36.** Our brothers, after enduring brief pain, have drunk of never-failing life, under God's covenant. But you, by the judgment of God, shall receive just punishments for your arrogance. **37.** Like my brothers, I offer up my body and my life for our ancestral laws, imploring God to show mercy soon to our nation, and by afflictions and blows to make you confess that he alone is God. **38.** Through me and my brothers, may there be an end to the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation." **39.** At that, the king became enraged and treated him even worse than the others, since he bitterly resented the boy's contempt. **40.** Thus he too died undefiled, putting all his trust in the Lord. **41.** Last of all, after her sons, the mother was put to death.<sup>176</sup>

Recent studies about the so-called religious reforms of Antiochus IV Epiphanes such as by Hengel reveal that:

The temple at Jerusalem was to be turned into a shrine of Zeus Olympius, and its whole symbolic character changed by turning the sanctuary into a sacred grove and erecting a massebah or sacred stone over the altar of incense (2Macc 6:2)

Thus the Yahweh worship regulated by Pentateuchal law was replaced by an older form similar to that which had actually been outlawed by Deuteronomy (Dt 16:21f), but was now reintroduced in a Greek guise as the worship of Zeus who according to primitive Greek custom was also worshipped without a temple on a high mountain. This explains why the new cult could be practiced in 'the cities of Judah' (1Macc 1:44-51) also, and why the distinctive Jewish way of life which the torah represented had to be eradicated the special relationship between Israel and Yahweh on which that way of

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<sup>176</sup> ibid Chapter 7.

life was based was to be abolished for a more universal and natural religion which could support the ‘cosmic’ aspirations of the hellenizers.”<sup>177</sup>

Up to 168 B.C. the temple of Jerusalem had become the temple of Zeus where swine flesh was offered on the altar. 2Machabees records that:

Not long after this the king sent an Athenian senator to force the Jews to abandon the customs of their ancestors and live no longer by the laws of God; also to profane the temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Olympian Zeus, and that on Mount Gerizim to Zeus the Hospitable, as the inhabitants of the place requested. This intensified the evil in an intolerable and utterly disgusting way. The gentiles filled the temple with debauchery and revelry; they amused themselves with prostitutes and had intercourse with women even in the sacred court. They also brought in to the temple things that were forbidden, so that the altar was covered with abominable offerings prohibited by the laws.<sup>178</sup>

Sensing a rebellion from the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes took further drastic actions to crush them:

In rapid succession during the years 168 and 167, Jews were massacred, the Temple was looted, the practice of the Jewish religion was proscribed. Circumcision became punishable by death, as was Sabbath observance. The ultimate insult came in December 167, when, by order of Antiochus, an alter to Zeus was erected within the Temple, and the Jews were required to sacrifice swine flesh unclean, of course, by Jewish law – to the God of the Greeks.<sup>179</sup>

## **Abolition of the Jewish Law**

It was due to the programme of intensive Hellenization of Palestine that Antiochus IV took more severe action to wipe out Judaism from different parts of the Holy Land. It has therefore been reported that:

A man could not keep the Sabbath or celebrate the traditional feasts, **nor even admit that he was a Jew**. Moreover, at the monthly celebration of the king’s birthday the Jews had, from bitter necessity, to partake of the sacrifices, and when the festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled

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<sup>177</sup> Sean Freyne, GALILEE, From Alexander the Great to Hadrian, p. 263-4.

<sup>178</sup> 2Macc. 6:1-5

<sup>179</sup> Abba Eban HERITAGE: Civilization & the Jews, Pg. 77.

to march in his procession, wearing wreaths of ivy.

At the suggestion of the citizens of Ptolemais, a decree was issued ordering the neighboring Greek cities to act in the same way against the Jews; oblige them to partake of the sacrifices, and **put to death those who would not consent to adopt the customs of the Greeks**. It was obvious, therefore, that disaster impended. Thus two women who were arrested for having circumcised their children were publicly paraded about the city **with their babies hanging at their breasts and then thrown down from the top of the city wall**. Others, who had assembled in nearby caves to observe the Sabbath in secret, were betrayed to Philip **and all burned to death**. In their respect for the holiness of that day, they had scruples about defending themselves.<sup>180</sup>

The policy of Hellenization in Judea continued unabated throughout the reign of Antiochus IV. Another description of the same is given below:

Thus, in effect, a Greek polis was established in the undefended city and the temple, became virtually a city shrine devoted as much to Zeus as Yahweh. Judaism was fast becoming another Syro-Hellenic cult, organized by the state as part of the trappings of Seleucid imperialism. Real integration of the Jew into his pagan environment was at last becoming established fact and this time with the active collaboration of a sizeable and influential part of the population, priestly as well as lay.

Antiochus determined to press this Hellenization of Jerusalem even further. Perhaps had he waited, exclusive Judaism might have died a natural death and crumbled away as effectively as the broken walls that symbolized her hard won autonomy. But, impatient of pockets of conservatism that resisted his changes; Antiochus decreed that cancellation of the special rights and privileges of the Jews and in effect forbade the practice of distinctive Judaism. Regular sacrifices were suspended, the observance of the Sabbath and traditional festivals forbidden, **circumcision of children made a crime and copies of the Law were ordered to be destroyed**. Pagan altars were erected throughout the territory and **Jews were forced to participate in the attendant rites and to eat swine's flesh**. Later chroniclers saw as the climax to all this sacrilege the introduction in December 167 B.C. of the cult of the Olympian Zeus into the Temple, and the erection of some kind of **image, probably phallic, to represent the god** (the "abomination of

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<sup>180</sup> 2Macc. 6:6-11.

desolation" of Daniel) within the holy place.

The severity with which these measures were enforced upon Jews, in callous disregard of any scruples of individual conscience crystallized opposition which, in turn, made Antiochus even more brutal in his suppression of the Jewish cult. Groups keeping the Sabbath secretly were sought out and massacred by Greek soldiers; women persisting in circumcising their children brought upon themselves and their offspring an immediate death penalty; similarly fates awaited those who refused to eat ritually unclean food. Passive opposition centered around a sect known as the "pious Ones" (Hasidim), who for a time resisted pressures to take up arms against their persecutors.<sup>181</sup>

Antiochus IV 'outlawed Jewish religious rites and traditions kept by observant Jews and ordered the worship of Zeus as the supreme god (2 Maccabees 6:1–12). This was anathema to the Jews and they refused, so Antiochus sent an army to enforce his decree. The city of Jerusalem was destroyed (168 BC) because of the resistance, many were slaughtered, and Antiochus established a military Greek citadel called the Acra'.

## **Overthrow of the Greeks**

It is evident from the above that Mattathias and his sons including Judah Maccabius had to take up arms only to defend their religion and the law. Referring to 1Macc 2:32 therefore, N. H. Snaith says that:

The insistent attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to wipe out the Jewish religion and to destroy every copy of the Law did a very great deal to **ensure a more rigid determination to hold on to these things**. Opposition from Hellenisers within Jewry did but increase the resistance of the faithful. So determined were they to observe the law in all its strictness that they even refused to defend themselves on the Sabbath, with the result that many of them were massacred, and their women and children with them.<sup>182</sup>

All such cruelties led to rebellion of Judas the Maccabius along his companions who ultimately succeeded in overthrowing the Seleucid kingdom in the Holy Land.

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<sup>181</sup> John M. Allegro, *THE CHOSEN PEOPLE*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, 1971) p. 18, 20.

<sup>182</sup> Norman H. Snaith, *The Jews from Cyrus to Herod*, p. 152-153.

Maccabians continued to rule Judea and other regions from 167 to 63 BC. By that time the Greek power had declined and Romans had started controlling Judea and other parts of Palestine. Being cultural successors of the Greeks, the Romans too, had great pride of their civilization. They also considered themselves as super-humans while people belonging to other nations were taken to be born only to serve them. Romans, therefore, adopted the policy of destroying the nations or the individuals who dreamt about freedom from them.

In the likeness of the Jews, both the Greeks and the Romans had firm faith in their racial superiority over other nations. While the Greeks and the Romans had been bent upon assimilating the Jews as their natural subjects to obey the Roman law and commandments of the Roman emperor, **the Jews stubbornly refused any king except the Lord.** Inculcation of Hellenistic culture among the Jews and to make them subservient to Greco-Roman law had been the hardest task before the Greeks as well as the Romans. Both the nations, therefore, subjected the Israelites to the worst cruelties that can be imagined by us. Large number of the Israelites were exiled to other lands or sold as slaves in the West.

The Greeks as well as the Romans had been suffering from acute sense of superiority over other nations. The citizens of Rome were entitled to all the human rights while slaves were treated merely as chattels<sup>183</sup>, without having any basic rights whatsoever. A slave was treated as personal property of the master who could dispose him off in whatever manner he pleased. The institution of slavery seemed to be a natural order of creation. Slaves, as such, were born only to serve the superior races such as the Greeks and the Romans who had divinely approved rights to rule over them. Some went to the extent of believing that the slaves had no souls. They also had a similar view about women. At times, the masters (i.e. the Greeks and the Romans) were free to

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<sup>183</sup> 'Chattels' means: 'any movable property'.

punish their slaves to such an extent that the torture could take even the life of the slaves. In such a case, the master could be punished sometimes by a fine but normally no cognizance was taken of the savagery either by the state or the society.<sup>184</sup>

## **Jews at Jerusalem**

Greeks and especially Antiochus IV had shown extreme brutality to obliterate Judaism and to replace the same with Hellenism. **Romans believed in one king, one law, one language and one culture.** They did not lag behind the Greeks in crushing the spirits of the Jews by eliminating their law, the rituals, the sanctuaries and the convictions that there was no king except the Almighty. The Romans, therefore, spared no brutality towards the dissenters from the Roman rule or those unwilling to bow before the culture and faith of the Romans.

Historians in the West eulogize the Roman power and terror which according to them was an idealistic system of polity for the world empire of Rome. The successors of Rome in the West, therefore, continue to lament over the sad demise of the tyrannical empire of Rome feted and fattened on the flesh and blood of their subjects especially the slaves. The conviction that they were the super humans with divinely approved rights to rule over other nations of the world did not allow them to acknowledge the humanity or basic rights of the non-Romans. The rights over lands, wealth, justice and life were limited only to the Roman citizens.

About 7 years after the conquest of Jerusalem, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus renewed an agreement known as 'Triumvirate' BC 56. Crassus thereafter took over government of Syria (BC 55-53) from Gabinus. He was already the richest person in the Roman World but he did not hesitate to plunder the temple at Jerusalem in violation of his oath. Eventually, the tyrant met his fate in the arid waste of Mesopotamia where he stood

<sup>184</sup> *Enc. Britannica*, 15<sup>th</sup> Edn., 1982: MACROPAEDIA, 27:228, s.v. 'Servitude'; sub-heading: 'Greece and Rome'.

defeated and slain.<sup>185</sup> The plunder of the temple aroused bitter feeling of resentment against Romans which instigated the Jews to cooperate with the victorious Persians who tried to drive Romans out of Asia. Cassius the brave lieutenant of Crassus somehow managed to lead the shattered legions of Crassus back to Syria. He had hardly 10,000 men with him. In spite of the unfavorable circumstances, Cassius succeeded to suppress the insurrection in Judea. After executing the leaders of the rebels, he sold about 30,000 of the Jewish warriors in the slave market in about 51 BC.

## From Herod to Vespasian

The period from Herod (r. 34-1 BC) and Emperor Vespasian (r. 69-79 AD) was filled with different minor as well as major insurrections and under ground efforts of the Jewish community to overthrow the yoke of their slavery under the Romans. Herod himself was notorious for his barbarities against his opponents among the Jews and also for the cruel murder of his wife and sons. We can, however, count rebuilding of the temple, construction of the Western Wall and expansion of the temple mount among his good deeds. Harsh treatment of Jews at the hands of Herod and his successors to promote the cause of the Romans had led to ever mounting anger against the Romans at Jerusalem. Jesus was born (about 6 BC) and crucified by the Romans at Jerusalem (about 30 AD) within the same turbulent period. Romans subjected him to ignominious death of crucifixion reserved only for the slave insurrectionists.

About 65 years after Herod, Florus the Procurator of Judaea demanded 17 Talents of Gold from Temple treasury. This led to an open insurrection of the Jews in May 66 AD. Emperor Nero entrusted the command to General Titus Flavius Vespasianus to crush the Jewish insurrection 66-70 AD. The period of Herod and Nero can be counted among the darkest periods for human

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<sup>185</sup> W. D. Morrison, p. 45.

beings under subjugation of Rome. Both had special taste for homicide. Vespasianus proceeded to Judaea accompanied by his son Titus but due to death of Nero, Vespasianus had to return to Rome handing over the command to Titus. The Jews fought with great zeal to defend the city and the temple. They also believed that God would intervene miraculously at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to save His people and his temple.

Karen Armstrong describes the event in the following:

And so, when the Roman troops finally broke into the inner courts of the Temple on 28 August, they found six thousand Jewish zealots waiting to fight to the death. The Greeks historian Dio Cassius (d. 230) says that the Jews defended themselves with extraordinary courage, deeming it an honor to die in the defense of their Temple. Right up to the end, they observed the purity laws, each fighting in his appropriate place and despite the danger, refusing to enter forbidden areas: "The ordinary people fought in the forecourt and the nobility in the inner courts, while the priests defended the Temple building itself." Finally they saw the Temple catch fire, and a terrible cry of horror arose. Some flung themselves onto the swords of the Romans, others hurled themselves into the flames. But once the Temple had gone, the Jews gave up. They showed no interest in defending the Upper City or continuing the struggle from other fortresses nearby. Some asked leave to go out into the desert in the forlorn hope that this new exodus would lead to a new national liberation. The rest watched helplessly as Titus's officers efficiently demolished what was left of the Temple buildings, though, it was said, the western wall of the Devir was left standing. Since this was where the divine Presence had been thought to rest, Jews drew some consolation from this. But it was poor comfort. For centuries the Temple had stood at the heart of the Jewish world, and it was central to the Jewish religion. Once again it had been destroyed, but this time it would not be rebuilt.<sup>186</sup>

It is pertinent to note here that instead of eliminating the insurrectionists, Titus had made elaborate arrangements for extermination of the Jewish race from Jerusalem and the Holy Land. He refused asylum to those who begged for it. All people within the walls including old people, men, women and children who had

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<sup>186</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 152.

entered the city as pilgrims were forcefully restrained within the walls.

Titus ordered reprisals to be made against these half starved ghostly figures and against deserters. Anyone caught outside - deserters, raiders or foragers - was to be crucified. **Mercenaries hailed 500 of them every day to crosses just outside the city. Gradually a whole forest of crosses sprang up on the hillsides till the lack of wood called a halt to the frightful practice.** Tree after tree was sacrificed for crosses, siege ramps, scaling ladders and camp fires. The Romans had come into a flourishing countryside. Now the vineyards had disappeared as had the market gardens, the wealth of fig-trees and olive-trees; even the Mount of Olives no longer provided shade. An unbearable stench hung over the bare and desolate countryside. **The corpses of those who had died of starvation and of those who had died in battle, thrown over the ramparts by the beleaguered garrison, were piled beneath the walls by the thousand.** Who had the strength to bury them in the traditional way?<sup>187</sup>

To seal off the city hermetically Titus ordered the erection of a circumvallation". Working night and day they constructed a massive high wall of earthwork in a wide circle round Jerusalem, strengthened by thirteen fortified strong points and guarded by a close chain of pickets. If so far it had been possible to smuggle supplies and provisions into the city by night by way of secret paths through tunnels or ditches, the "circumvallation" stopped even this last meager reinforcement.<sup>188</sup>

It is said that when the Roman army encompassed the city it was crowded with inhabitants because pilgrims had come from far and wide. No one was allowed to escape. All this resulted into extreme shortage of food in the city with terrible effect on the citizens which Josephus describes as under:-

Accordingly the multitude of those that therein perished, exceeded all the destruction that either men or God ever brought upon the world; for, to speak only of what was publicly known, the Romans slew some of them, some they carried captives, and others they made search for under

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<sup>187</sup> Werner Keller, *The Bible as History*, 2nd Revised Edition, (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 410-11.

<sup>188</sup> ibid, p. 411-12.

ground, and when they found where they were, they broke up the ground and slew all they met with. There were also found slain there above two thousand persons, partly by their own hands, and partly by one another, but chiefly destroyed by the famine; but then, the ill savor of the dead bodies was most offensive to those that lighted upon them, insomuch that some were obliged to get away immediately, while others were so greedy of gain, that they would go in among the dead bodies that lay in heaps, and tread upon them; for a great deal of treasure was found in these caverns, and the hope of gain made every way of getting it to be esteemed lawful.<sup>189</sup>

## **Unspeakable Misery**

During the siege, the Jews had to experience miseries which had never been suffered by humankind on earth:

The spectre of famine haunted the city, which was filled to overflowing with pilgrims, and death mowed them down in a dread harvest. The craving for food, no matter of what sort, drove men beyond all bounds and killed all normal feeling.<sup>190</sup>

The terrible famine that increased in frightfulness daily annihilated whole families of the people. The terraces were full of women and children who had collapsed from hunger, the alleys were piled high with the bodies of the aged. Children and young people, swollen with lack of food, wandered around like ghosts until they fell. They were so far spent that they could no longer bury anyone, and if they did they fell dead upon the very corpses they were burying. The misery was unspeakable. For as soon as even the shadow of anything eatable appeared anywhere and tore from each other the most miserable trifles. No one would believe that the dying had no provisions stored away. Robbers threw themselves upon those who were drawing their last breath and ransacked their clothing. These robbers ran about reeling and staggering like mad dogs and hammered on the doors of houses like drunk men. In their despair they often plunged into the same house two or three times in the one day. Their hunger was so unbearable that they were forced to chew anything and everything. They laid hands on things that even the meanest of animals would not touch, far less eat. They had long since eaten their belts and shoes and even their leather jerkins were torn to shreds and hewed. Many of them fed on old hay and their were some who collected stalks of corn and sold a small quantity of it for four Attic drachmas.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>189</sup> *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, tr. by William Whiston, p. 737-738.

<sup>190</sup> *The Bible as History*, p.412.

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*, p.412.

Josephus writes that:

So the Romans being now become masters of the walls, they both placed their engines upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had gained, as having found the end of this war much lighter than its beginning; for when they had gotten upon the last wall, without any bloodshed, they could hardly believe what they found to be true; but seeing nobody to oppose them, they stood in doubt what such an unusual solitude could mean. But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses whither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood. And truly so it happened that though the slayers left off at the evening, yet did the fire greatly prevail in the night; and as all was burning, came that eighth day of the month Gorpieus (Elul), upon Jerusalem; a city that had been liable to so many miseries during this siege, that, had it always enjoyed as much happiness from its first foundation, it would certainly have been the envy of the world. nor did it on any other account so much deserve these sore misfortunes, as by producing such a generation of men as were the occasion of this its overthrow.<sup>192</sup>

Another paragraph from Josephus throws further light about the cruel treatment of Titus with the Jews:

And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and opposed them; but should take the rest alive. But, together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and the infirm; but for those that were in their flourishing age, and who might be

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<sup>192</sup> *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, tr. William Whiston, p. 737.

useful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and shut them up within the walls of the court of the women; over which Caesar set one of his freed men, as also Fronto, one of his own friends; which last was to determine every one's fate, according to his merits. So this Fronto slew all those that had been seditious and robbers, who were impeached one by another; but of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph; and as for the rest of the multitude, that were about seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon the theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those who were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. Now during the days wherein Fronto was distinguishing these men, there perished, for want of food, eleven thousand; some of whom did not taste any food, through the hatred their guards bore to them; and others would not take in any, when it was given them. The multitude also was so very great, that they were in want even of corn for their sustenance". (*ibid*)

## Oh God!

The narrative of tragedies caused by severe blockage of Jerusalem culminates in the following:

Zealots were foraging through the lanes of the city in quest of food. From one house came the smell of roast meat. The men plunged into the house at once and were confronted by Maria, daughter of the noble line of Beth-Ezob in Trans-Jordan, an extremely wealthy family. She had come to Jerusalem on pilgrimage for the Passover. The Zealots threatened her with death unless she handed over the roast meat to them. With a wild look she gave them what they asked for. **Aghast, they found themselves looking at a half consumed infant-Maria's own child.**

Soon not only the whole city learned of this, but the news also seeped out through the walls to the Roman camp. Titus swore that he would bury this dreadful deed under the ruins of the whole city. Many fled from death by starvation under cover of darkness and ran into the arms of an equally cruel fate. The story had got around among the Romans' auxiliaries that fugitives from within the walls always carried gold and jewels, which they had swallowed in the hope of preserving them from being seized by strangers. If any of these unsuspecting people were caught they were felled to the ground and their bodies slit open in the endless quest for plunder. In one night 2,000 alone lost their lives in this

way.<sup>193</sup> Titus was furious. Without mercy he got his cavalry to decimate an auxiliary unit. An order of the day made the crime punishable by death. But it was of little avail, the slaughter continued secretly.<sup>194</sup>

The loss of life among the Jews was unimaginably high. During the siege, according to Tacitus, there were 600,000 people in the city. Josephus gives the number of prisoners as 97,000, not counting those crucified or ripped open, and adds that within a period of three months 115,800 corpses were taken out of one of the city gates alone by the Jews.<sup>195</sup>

The Temple Mount was now a heap of rubble. Apart from the western wall of the Devir, only the huge walls supporting the Temple platform had survived the onslaught. Once they had dealt with the Temple, Titus's soldiers began to smash the elegant mansions in the upper City and pulled down Herod's beautiful palace. Archaeologists have revealed how thoroughly and ruthlessly the Romans troops went about their task. Houses collapsed and lay buried under piles of debris that were never cleared away. The Tyropoeon Valley was completely blocked with fallen masonry and silted up by the torrents that poured down the hillsides during the winter rains. The city walls were wholly demolished except for a section to the west of Upper City: this served to protect the Camp of the Tenth Legion Fretensis, which now occupied the site of Herod's palace. Visitors found it difficult to believe that Jerusalem had ever been an inhabited city. The emperors were at pains to warn the Jews against attempting any further rebellion. For years after 70 they struck coins depicting a Jewish woman with bound hands sitting desolately under a palm tree with the legend *Judaea Devicta* or *Judaea Capta*. The emperors Vespasian (70-79), Titus (79-81), Domitian (81-96), and Trajan (98-117) all ordered the Tenth Legion to hunt out and execute any Jew who claimed to be a descendant of King David.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> More than a thousand years after Titus, the crusaders took pride in repeating similar inhuman traditions of their Roman predecessors during their conquests of Antiochus, Marrah and Jerusalem (1098-1099 AD).

<sup>194</sup> *The Bible as History*, p.413. For a detailed account, please refer to William Whiston's *Works of Flavius Josephus*, (Boston: D Lothrop & Company, 1878), Book vi, Ch iv, p.726-727.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid*, p.416.

<sup>196</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 153.

## **Number of Slain in the Siege**

Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which, at the very first, occasioned so great a straitness among them, that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a famine, as destroyed them more suddenly.<sup>197</sup>

After crushing the revolt with the massacre of 1.1 million Jews in year 70 A.D., Caesar (Titus) also ordered the whole city and the temple to be razed to the ground.

In pursuance of the **policy of completely severing Palestine from its past**, a colony of veterans was settled near Jerusalem, the chief cities of the province were reorganized upon western principles and a determined effort was made to Romanize<sup>198</sup> the whole land.<sup>199</sup>

## **Enslavement of the Vanquished**

From the very inception of the empire, the Romans had started gathering ever increasing number of slaves. A passage from *Encyclopedia Britannica* throws some light on the Roman traditions about slavery:

Of the number furnished from this source a few particulars from the time of the mature republic and the first century of the empire will give some idea. In Epirus<sup>200</sup>, after the victories of Aemilius Paullus, 150,000 captives were sold. The prisoners at Aquae, Sextiae and Vercellae were 90,000 Teutons and 60,000 Cimbri. Caesar sold on a single occasion in Gaul 63,000 captives. But slavery, as Hume has shown, is unfavorable to population. Hence a regular commerce in slaves was established, which was based on the "systematically-prosecuted hunting of man," and indicated an entire perversion of the primitive institution, which was

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<sup>197</sup> *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, tr. by William Whiston, p. 737-738.

<sup>198</sup> The western crusaders too had destroyed a substantial part of Anatolia, Syria and Palestine only to Christianize the middle East and to destroy Muslims as well as Islam.

<sup>199</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 180.

<sup>200</sup> A geographical and historical region in southeastern Europe, now shared between Greece and Albania.

essentially connected with conquest. The pirates sold great numbers of slaves at Delos, where was the chief market for this kind of wares; and these sales went on as really, though more obscurely, after the successful expedition of Pompey. There was a regular importation to Rome of slaves, brought to some extent from Africa, Spain and Gaul, but chiefly from Asiatic countries--- Bithynia, Galatia Cappadocia and Syria.<sup>201</sup>

## Humiliation of the Defeated People

About the slaves, we had quoted earlier from Josephus that: "Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they **might be destroyed upon the theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts**; but those who were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves." As such, thousands of Jewish captives were placed in the public arena that either perished at the gladiatorial shows or in **combats with the wild beasts** during the festivities at Caesarea and Berytus.

Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus went to Rome to celebrate the triumph. Morrison describes the same:

The triumphal pageant was organized on a scale of unusual magnificence, and the Roman populace were invited to gaze on representations of the battles which had been fought as well as on the actual trophies captured in the course of the campaign. Among these trophies were the spoils of the Temple — the sacred vessels, the golden candlestick, and the rolls of the Law. Seven hundred of the tallest and most handsome among the Jewish captives walked in front of Vespasian and Titus, and when the great procession reached the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, it stood still until a tragic ceremony had been performed. It was an ancient Roman custom that the enemy's general should be hurled over the Tarpeian rocks. On this occasion Simon Bar Giora, one of the principal leaders of the Zealots, was the hapless victim, and when the messenger arrived to announce that the Jewish captain was slain, the multitude sent up a shout of joy, and prayers and sacrifices were forthwith offered up with great solemnity in the Temple.' To commemorate the overthrow of

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<sup>201</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 775.

the Jews gold, silver, and bronze coins were also struck. On some of these pieces we find the image of a Jewish warrior with his hands bound; Judaea is also represented in the form of a woman sitting in desolation under the shade of a palm tree, while around is the sad inscription, "Judaea captive." The sacred ornaments of the Jewish Temple were deposited in the Roman Temple of Peace, and the Book of the Law was kept in the imperial palace. All these tokens of the humiliated people have long since passed away, but the magnificent arch which was soon afterwards erected in Rome to commemorate the exploits of Titus still bears witness in all its shattered grandeur to the downfall of the Jewish national cause.<sup>202</sup>

## Pax Romana

**Pax means the kiss of peace.** As such, pax Romana means the Roman kiss for peace. Let us not forget that the Romans had killed millions of people belonging to other nations only for the sake of peace which to them and their successors always meant slavery or humble submission by other nations before them. Other nations in the world had no right to enjoy freedom or to live in accordance with their own law and traditions. The Roman temple of peace and various arches constructed at Rome are, therefore, the monuments to remind their successors that the ruthless use of force was necessary to make people obedient and peaceful servants of Rome.

Dissolution of the Jewish state was a part of the imperial policy which demanded obliteration of all the outward symbols of separate nationality among its subjects. Jerusalem and its temple was purposely left in ruins while high priest and the *Sanhedrin* were abolished to obliterate the centre of authority of the Jews. Here is a version of Hadrian's proposals for Jerusalem:

When Hadrian arrived in Jerusalem in 130, he decided that his gift to the people of Judaea would be a new city. The generous emperor would replace the unsightly ruin and desolate army base of Jerusalem with a modern metropolis called Aelia Capitolina: it would thus bear his own name and honor the gods of the Capitol in Rome, who would be its patrons.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, pg. 182-184.

<sup>203</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 161.

**Ch. 5-**

# HUMANKIND UNDER THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS

## **Aelia Capitolina**

The Roman general Publius Aelius Hadrianus had become emperor of Rome in 118 AD. According to Karen Armstrong, he was one of the ablest men who ever held this office. Other Historians admire him for his broadmindedness and competence to manage the affairs of the vast empire. It is said that the happiness of the people was the supreme object of Hadrianus. Justice and moderation was the spirit in which that object was pursued. (...) his inexhaustible activity was devoted to works of reform and peace.<sup>204</sup> He had great love for restoring the magnificence of the past. Jerusalem, however, happened to be the exception about which it has been stated that:

Since its destruction by Titus, the holy city had remained in ruins and the sanctuary of Israel had become a haunt for beasts of prey.<sup>205</sup>

Jerusalem stood in desolation since 70 A.D. to 130 A.D. when Emperor Hadrian visited the ruins and decided to rebuild it as a city dedicated to Jupiter. The city was to be called Aelia Capitolina instead of Jerusalem:

Jerusalem was discarded for the new constructions which were to spring up on the hills of Zion: the sacred spot was to have all traces of its past obliterated; it was henceforth to be spoken of as Aelia Capitolina, a name given it in honour of the emperor and the supreme divinity of Rome. Jerusalem was to be heathen city; within its walls Venus was to have her shrine, and a temple to Jupiter was to stand on the ruins that had been consecrated to the worship of Israel's God.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 196.

<sup>205</sup> ibid p. 197.

<sup>206</sup> ibid p. 198.

Initially, even the Jews had taken Hadrian as a second Cyrus but after knowing his plans about Jerusalem they apprehended the proposed changes as outright obliteration of the sanctuary, the faith and religious entity of the Jewish race:

Far more distressing to the Jews, however, were the religious symbols that appeared triumphantly in the Holy City of YHWH. Aelia was indeed dedicated to the three Capitoline gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, but after the Jewish War, Hadrian seems to have thought better of locating the Temple of Jupiter on the Old Temple Mount. No visitor ever reports seeing a pagan temple on Herod's platform, but they did see two statues there: one of Hadrian and the other of his successor, Antoninus Pius. The Temple of Jupiter could have been built beside the chief commercial forum of Aelia on the Western Hill. A temple to Aphrodite was also built beside the western forum on the site of the Golgotha hill. Christians would later accuse Hadrian of deliberately desecrating this holy place, but it is most unlikely that the emperor had even registered the existence of the obscure church of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. St. Jerome (c. 342-420) believed that this temple was dedicated to Jupiter but that the peak of the Golgotha hill protruded above the platform of the sanctuary surmounted by a statue of Aphrodite, although he does not explain how a temple to Jupiter came to have such a prominent statue of the Goddess.<sup>207</sup>

Natural outcome of the same could be nothing but insurrections against the Romans. Bar-Kokheba or Ben-Kosiba, a famous rabbi, emerged as a head of the insurgents. He believed in the immediate coming of Messiah. Another Rabbi named Akiba projected him as the long-predicted messianic king and the star (*Kokab*) that should come forth out of Jacob. He was, therefore, taken as the long-expected deliverer of Israel from the yoke of Rome.<sup>208</sup> Learning about the insurrection, Hadrian sent Sextus Julius Severus, the most distinguished soldier of his age to crush the revolt. Severus proceeded to chastise the insurgents in the following manner:

One after another of the Jewish strongholds was captured; the defenders were decimated and the country laid in ruins. The fortress of Bethar with its wonderful subterranean passages

<sup>207</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 165-166.

<sup>208</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 200.

was held by Bar-Kokheba with the tenacity of despair. But the Romans, aided by the horrors of thirst and famine, eventually obtained the mastery, and the rebel leader perished amid the ruins of his cause.<sup>209</sup>

The Romans systematically wiped out one Jewish stronghold after another in Judaea and Galilee. Dio Cassius tells us that **the Romans took fifty fortresses, devastated 985 villages, and killed 580000 Jewish soldiers**: "as to those who perished by hunger, pestilence, or fire, no man could number them. Thus almost the whole of Judaea was laid waste. Finally in 135, Bar Koseba was driven out of Jerusalem and killed in his last citadel at Bethar."<sup>210</sup>

According to the scattered intimations of ancient writers it was a war of extermination. The devastation and massacre which marked its progress and crowned its close were of much greater magnitude than the terrible scenes enacted in the days of Vespasian and Titus. Without" taking account of the vast numbers that perished by famine and disease, it is credibly reported that **over half a million men fell fighting in the field**. The miserable survivors whose lives were spared glutted the slave markets of the East. Some of the fugitives from Roman vengeance concealed themselves in caves and subterranean passages ; many of them were impelled by hunger to devour the bodies of the dead, and those were considered fortunate who escaped into the wilderness. It would almost seem to have been the object of the Roman administration **to make Palestine intolerable to the children of Abraham**, and the desolate aspect of Judaea at the present day is a silent witness of the awful severity with which this final rising was suppressed.<sup>211</sup>

According to other reports, **Severus had killed more than one million Jews at Jerusalem during 132 to 135 AD.** Hadrian, thereafter, forbade Jewish and Christian presence in the city. Ultimately a temple to Jupiter was built on the temple mount and a temple to Venus was built on Calvary during 136-140 AD.

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<sup>209</sup> ibid p. 202-203.

<sup>210</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 161.

<sup>211</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 203.

## **Freedom to Weep**

The ban on Jewish entry into Aelia imposed by Hadrian in 135 AD remained effective till 325 AD i.e. up to the reign of Constantine the Great. To humiliate the Jews, however, the Romans had graciously allowed them one day's freedom to enter the city to weep over the site of the temple. It has been recorded that:

But this general prohibition did not apply to one day in the year—the anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by Titus. On that day of bitter memory the Jews could obtain permission to weep over the site of the Temple and to anoint the stone where it was believed the Holy of Holies had stood."

The revolt under Hadrian was the last supreme effort of the Jews to separate themselves from the confederation of nations held together by Roman arms.<sup>212</sup>

After the Barkokhba war the Romans expelled Jewish-Community from Aelia. Christians were not permitted to build their own places of worship. Karen Armstrong reports that:

The city that Jesus had known had now been obliterated by Hadrian's new town. Golgotha, for example was now buried under the temple of Afrodite, and the Christians would not want to worship there. (...) there is no evidence that Jerusalem was a major pilgrim centre for Christians during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. (...) Thus Jerusalem had no special status on the Christian map.<sup>213</sup>

## **Aelia Under the Byzantines**

In 326 A.D. Constantine's mother Helena visited Jerusalem and ordered the destruction of Hadrian's temple to Venus built on Calvary. In 335 A.D. first church of Holy Sepulcher was built on Calvary. In 380 A.D., **Theodosius I declared Nicaean Christianity the state church of the Roman Empire.**

Right from the time of Hadrian (117-138 AD), Constantine (306-337 AD), and especially since the Romans adopted Christianity as a state religion, they had been persecuting the Jews severely. The emperors

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<sup>212</sup> W. D. Morrison, Vol. 24, p. 204.

<sup>213</sup> See Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 170-171.

used to oblige them all to be baptized and to eat pork at Easter.<sup>214</sup> The Jews who married a Christian, incurred the penalty of death.

Gibbon reports that:

At Minorca, the relics of St. Stephen converted, in eight days, five hundred and forty Jews; with the help, indeed, of some wholesome severities, such as burning the synagogue, driving the obstinate infidels to starve among the rocks, etc.<sup>215</sup>

Similar types of incidence also took place at other cities.

In Alexandria, in the fifth century, the Jews were routed and expelled from the city, their houses plundered, and their synagogues appropriated to the use of the Church, by St. Cyril, the patriarch. This was a sample of what they had to endure in many cities where Christianity was triumphant.<sup>216</sup>

Gibbon also Remarked that:

In the creed of Justinian the guilt of murder could not be applied to the slaughter of unbelievers, and he piously labored to establish, with fire and sword, the unity of the Christian faith.<sup>217</sup>

## Retaliation of the Jews

The situation continued up to the time, the Persian king attacked and took over Jerusalem from the Romans.

Dr. Hemen says that: "Bishops did not hesitate to resort to acts of violence to compel the Jews to become Christians. Bishop Avitus, of Clermont-Ferrand, having preached to the Jews without any results, the Christians destroyed the synagogues." During the whole course of the persecution, the Jews rarely ventured to show resentment against their oppressors, but once they tasted a momentary revenge. When Chosroes, the Persian king, on the decay of the Roman empire, invaded Palestine, the Jews sprang up in arms against their Christian tyrants, and aided in the siege of Jerusalem. The city fell, and the enraged Israelites rushed to the massacre of the Christians. It was a rumor of the time that

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<sup>214</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 256.

<sup>215</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. III, (London: Oxford, St. John Square, 1821) p. 484.

<sup>216</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 259.

<sup>217</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. V,(New York: Cosimo Inc. 2008), p. 136.

ninety thousand perished. Every Christian church was demolished.<sup>218</sup>

Khusraw II i.e. Khusraw Parvēz (the last great king of the Sasanian Empire) had taken over Jerusalem in 614 AD. He burnt The Church of Holy Sepulcher. And took the true cross and other relics to Ctesiphon. Most of the city was also destroyed. In a series of battles with Khusraw, the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius succeeded to retake Jerusalem and also to recover the true cross from them. In 629 he restored the True Cross to Jerusalem in a majestic ceremony. Eventually, in 638 A.D. the Muslims took over the city from the Christians peacefully.

## **The Lesson of History**

Romans actually considered themselves as successors of the Greeks. They took over from the Mecabeans in 63 BC. The history of the Jews from 333 BC up to the birth of the Christ was before them. They were fully aware of the fact that more than 300 years of cruelties perpetrated on the Jews, the Greeks as well as the Romans had achieved no success to achieve their goals. The wide-spread massacre and atrocities on the Jews had hardened them in their faith and they had been ever-ready to resist any efforts of the Romans than to relinquish their faith and to adopt the Greco-roman culture and law to become devoted subjects of Rome.

As regards Romans, they never lacked good policy makers and the philosophers to advise them to deal with such matters. They desired to establish a universal faith to assimilate the mythological religions, polytheists, pagans, the Jews, the Magis and the Zoroastrians to form a unification of faith in their empire (**As an outcome of the said policy, the Romans succeeded to establish the Roman Catholic i.e. the Roman Universal religion throughout their empire**).<sup>219</sup> Since assimilation of all groups through force and coercion had ended in a miserable failure, therefore, the

<sup>218</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 260.

<sup>219</sup> More than 1500 years after the Romans, Akbar the great of India (r. 1556-1605 AD) had also tried to introduce a universal religion combining all religions prevailing in India. His 'Deen-e-Ilahi', however, did not survive even for ten years after his death.

think tanks of the Romans devised better plans for cohesion of all people within the empire. They found it expedient to achieve the desired results by shaking the foundations of the faith of the Israelites and other religions.

The Israelites had deep-rooted attachment to **Yahweh as the lawgiver and the only savior of His people**. To divert their loyalties to the Roman Empire, therefore, they needed in-depth study of the Jewish religion, to suggest ways and means to replace their faith with easiest suggestion of salvation rather than life-long obedience and hard as well as regular prayers and sacrifices to Yahweh. For this purpose the Romans chose Saul, a Greek speaking Jew who was a citizen of Rome. Besides other studies, Saul had achieved proficiency in the Greek knowledge and logic as well as the Jewish studies. He had been a disciple of Jamaliel, the most renowned teacher of Jewish religion of his time. Later on Saul changed his name as Paul. He had been persecuting the Jewish converts to Christianity. After his conversion to Christianity, he claimed to be the apostle of Jesus Christ towards the gentiles. St. Paul preached Jesus as the Jewish messiah and son of God. It was, therefore, through his teachings that many Jews were converted to the Christianity and with many converts from the gentiles, St. Paul laid the foundation of a new religion which proved to be extremely friendly rather than submissive to the Roman authorities as shall be discussed subsequently.

Although, St. Paul had started introducing the new religion in the early fifties of the first century yet it took long time to bring fruits. Had it gained immediate popularity among the Jews and the gentiles, it could have saved massacre of more than a million people during the Jewish revolt of 66-70 AD and a similar numbers of death during the revolt of Bar Kochba from 130-135 AD. Dispersal of Jews and elimination of the centre of their religious teachings at Jerusalem had caused much loss to the Jewish faith. Similarly, with the

elimination or dispersal of the true and the earliest apostles and disciples of Jesus from the Holy Land had created such a chasm of faith that people readily accepted the easiest formula of salvation developed by St. Paul. It, however, took about 300 years to gain popularity in the empire. It became a dominant religion in Rome under the patronage of Constantine the Great (r. 306-337 AD) who is reported having leaned towards the cross and the Christianity since 312 AD but is said to have been baptized shortly before his death in 337 AD.

**Ultimately Theodosius I declared the Nicene Creed or the Catholicism as the state religion of Rome in 380 AD.** While prior to promulgation of the state religion, Christians and Jews had been the worst sufferers from persecution in the world, the adoption of Christianity as the state religion made the Jews as well as the non-Christians the target of unprecedented persecution and coercion in the world.

## **Origin of Romans**

Nothing is known about the ancient past of the Romans. According to a legend, it was in about 735 BC when Rome was founded by Romulus and Remus as quoted below:

Romulus and Remus were the twin brothers and main characters of Rome's foundation myth. Their mother was Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, king of Alba Longa. Before their conception, Numitor's brother Amulius seized power, killed Numitor's male heirs and forced Rhea Silvia to become a Vestal Virgin, sworn to chastity. Rhea Silvia conceived the twins by the god Mars. Once the twins were born, Amulius had them abandoned to die in the Tiber river. They were saved by a series of miraculous interventions: the river carried them to safety, a she-wolf found and suckled them, and a woodpecker fed them. A shepherd and his wife found them and fostered them to manhood as simple shepherds.<sup>220</sup>

Touching their youth both brothers had acquired many followers. In a subsequent quarrel between the brothers Remus was killed and Romulus founded a new city at the Capitoline Hill and named it Rome after himself.

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<sup>220</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Romulus and Remus'.

Romulus with the help of his followers who were mostly unmarried males arranged the abduction of women from the neighboring Sabines. Thanks to divine favour and Romulus's inspired leadership, Rome became a dominant force, but Romulus himself became increasingly autocratic, and disappeared or died in mysterious circumstances. In later forms of the myth, he ascended to heaven and was identified with Quirinus, the divine personification of the Roman people.<sup>221</sup>

In about 509 B.C. Rome was being ruled by the wicked Etruscan king, Tarquinii the proud when the nobles drove him out to make Rome a republic ruled by two councils elected by the senate each year. The Romans learned about the Greek civilization from the Greek city states in the south and they started over-powering their neighbors in Italy to the extent that they became a major force in the region. They had been at war against their rivals and especially the Carthagians. Ultimately, after a century of terrible wars with the trading empire of Carthage in North Africa they succeeded in crushing it in 140 B.C. Rome as such became the greatest power in the Mediterranean.

According to the legend, therefore, **the primogenitors of Rome were sons of War God Mars, fostered through suckling the she-wolf. They, therefore, had God-the father-the wolf or mother-the wolf.** It was natural for them to inherit the characteristics of bloodshed, abduction and rapacious ruthlessness to flourish. Killing own brother or others ruthlessly for power and wealth was, therefore, the basic inherited trait of the Romans. Judith Still observes that:

This is Caligula's reasoning as well as that of Hobbes and Grotius, says Rousseau (pointing to a notorious Roman sovereign, Romans being emblematically associated with wolves), which leads to the conclusion *either* that men are beasts or that kings are gods. In other words, there is a rationale for exploitation in that men and kings are performatively asserted to be radically different in kind. The sovereign regards the people as animals whom he keeps *in order to* devour them; the consumption of the people is not a

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<sup>221</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Romulus and Remus'.

later or contingent accident, Derrida notes, but the sovereign's purpose. Equally, we might say with La Fontaine's wolf in 'The Companions of Ulysses' that the shepherd's (or man's) purpose is primarily to devour his flock himself, and that is why he protects them from a (nother) wolf. In a way this sovereign is even worse than Plato's tyrant who has developed a taste for human flesh.<sup>222</sup>

We have already observed that the Roman system of life was that in which slavery had its most natural and relatively legitimate place; and accordingly it was at Rome that, as Blair has remarked, the institution was more than anywhere else "extended in its operation and methodized in its details." (...) Of the number furnished from this source a few particulars from the time of the mature republic and the first century of the empire will give some idea. In Epirus, after the victories of Aemilius Paullus, 150,000 captives were sold. The prisoners at Aquae Sextiae and Vercellae were 90,000 Teutons and 60,000 Cimbri. Caesar sold on a single occasion in Gaul 63,000 captives. But slavery, as Hume has shown, is unfavourable to population. Hence a regular commerce in slaves was established, which was based on the "systematically-prosecuted hunting of man," and indicated an entire perversion of the primitive institution, which was essentially connected with conquest. The pirates sold great numbers of slaves at Delos, where was the chief market for this kind of wares; and these sales went on as really, though more obscurely, after the successful expedition of Pompey. There was a regular importation to Rome of slaves, brought to some extent from Africa, Spain and Gaul, but chiefly from Asiatic countries—Bithynia, Galatia, Cappadocia and Syria.<sup>223</sup>

## **Destruction of Carthage**

Carthage<sup>224</sup> is said to have been founded in 814 BC by Phoenician emigrants from Tyre led by mythological princess Dido. After the capture of Tyre by the Babylonians in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Carthage became the natural leader of the Phoenician colonies in North Africa and Spain. Carthage had a prolonged struggle with the Greeks which centered mainly on Sicily. About 540 BC

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<sup>222</sup> Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, p. 261-262.

<sup>223</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 775.

<sup>224</sup> 'CARTHAGE' was an ancient city in N. Africa in the vicinity of Modern Tunis. It grew fast and flourished for almost seven centuries as one of the ancient world's wealthiest and most powerful communities. It was eventually defeated and razed by Rome.

the Carthaginians repulsed a Greek attempt to land in Corsica while in 480 BC a Carthaginian attempt to conquer the whole of Sicily was defeated by the Greeks in Himera. In 264 BC Rome and Carthage went to a war for control of Sicily and western Mediterranean. This led them to a series of wars known as '**Punic wars**'<sup>225</sup>. **With a population of about 250,000, Carthage then was about three times the size of Rome.** They also had a huge navy of 500 ships while Rome having much larger troops had no navy whatsoever.

In 218 BC, Hanibal of Carthage assembled an army of 5000 infantry, 9000 cavalry and 60 elephants to try to capture Rome itself. After conquering Spain, Hanibal passed through Alps and defeated much larger Roman armies, three times on their home ground. Although, Hanibal did not succeed to conquer Rome yet he kept them at great trouble for next 13 years. Subsequently, Scipio, a great general of Rome attacked Carthage itself forcing Hanibal to rush home to rescue his own people. At the battle of Zamma in 202 BC Scipio Africanus defeated Hanibal. Hanibal survived but could not regain his former prowess for war. He committed suicide seven years later. The said suicide<sup>226</sup> brought an end to the

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<sup>225</sup> 'PUNIC WARS' 3 wars between Carthage and Rome in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. The final outcome of these wars was the triumph of Rome and the destruction of Carthage. By eliminating this powerful rival, Rome took a decisive step forward in its march toward empire (*Merit Students Enc*, 15:390).

<sup>226</sup> Here is a brief account of 'Hannibal' adopted from the *Merit Students Enc*, 1967, 8:391:

Hannibal': Carthaginian general. Born about 247 BC. Died at Bithynia, about 182 BC. In 221 BC, Hannibal succeeded his brother-in-law Hasdrubal as commander of the Carthaginian army in Spain. In 216 BC he won the greatest victory over the largest army the Romans had ever assembled. At the battle of Cannae, which ranks as one of the bloodiest battles in ancient history, Hannibal's forces slaughtered more than 50,000 Roman soldiers. For the next 13 years, he maintained himself in Italy. Hannibal, one of the greatest generals and military strategists in history, led Carthage against Rome in the *Second Punic War*. His tactics were so successful that he lost no battle against the Romans. Rome, however, could not be conquered by him. His most notable success was the capture of Taranto in 212 BC, by which he gained direct communication with Cartage by sea. In 203 BC he was

Carthagian expeditions against Rome. Eventually the war between Rome and Carthage ended in complete defeat of Carthage in 146 BC at the hand of Scipio Aemilianus the grand son of Scipio Africanus mentioned above.

## **Genocide and Colonization**

The population of Carthage before its destruction by the Romans is said to have **numbered over 700,000 which stood either massacred or enslaved**. The citizens withheld the Roman siege for three years. Ultimately, when the Roman army broke into the city they set it on fire which could not be extinguished for 6 days. During this period the Romans utterly destroyed the city after plundering everything therein. Legends say that after Carthage was destroyed the Romans plowed salt into the soil so that even the crops would not spring up again for Rome's hateful rival.<sup>227</sup> All human habitation was forbidden for the next 25 years.

In about 122 BC the Roman senate entrusted Marcus Fulvius Flaccus with the foundation of a colony on the site of Carthage. Later on Julius Caesar also sent a number of landless citizens there and in 29 BC Augustus made it the centre of the Roman Province of Africa. Thereafter it became known as '*Colonia Julia Carthago*' just as Jerusalem after its utter destruction by the Romans and **massacre of about 1.1 million Jews in the year 70 AD** by the Army of Titus was reconstructed by Hadrian as a Roman city with its new name i.e. *Aelia Capitolina*. (*Enc. Britannica* and Hutchinsons 1996).

In the same year, the Romans utterly destroyed Corinth as quoted below:

Rome singled out Corinth for punishment as an example to the others. In 146 BC, its people were massacred or enslaved,

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recalled to Carthage. In 202 BC he was defeated near the northern coast of Africa. He withdrew into exile. in 190 BC the Romans defeated him for the last time at eurymendon River in southern AsiaMinor. He then fled to Bythinia. The Romans demanded his surrender which he refused and ended his life by swallowing poison.

<sup>227</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, p. 140.

its walls wrecked, and its homes and temples burned. The once lovely city was reduced to an ash heap.<sup>228</sup>

These instances show at one hand brutality and genocide by the Romans while on the other their policy to introduce Roman culture in the lands conquered by them. **After colonizing the new territories with the Roman citizens, they eliminated the indigenous people therein.** As such destruction of a nation and its capital along with devastation of land has usually been described by the western historians with pride and without any passion narrative for the victims of Rome. Passion narrative for human sufferers had never found a place in the literature of Rome. As regards passion for Jesus Christ, it was not for tortures inflicted on a man but for the God of the Christian West. Although the Romans had killed him as an insurrectionist like hundreds of other Jews in the holy land yet the evangelists abiding within the Roman Empire had no moral integrity or courage to record the true facts. To save their skin they found it expedient to transfer the entire blame on the Jews who were destined to suffer from vengeance of the Christian West right from the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD up to 1945 AD.

## Colonization of Cyrenaica

Cyrenaica had been heavily colonized by Greeks in antiquity. The Greek city that existed within the modern day of Benghazi was founded around 525 BC. It was called Eusperides. Greek colony had lasted from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Spartans have also been invading the city at various times. Subsequently, the area became part of the Ptolemaic kingdom in about 96 BC. This followed settlement of Greeks in Cyrenaica. Berenice had been an important city of Cyrenaica where Christians came from Egypt. Many of the earlier Christians were non-Trinitarian sabbellions and carpocrations. By 431, the whole Libya was conquered

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<sup>228</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, *World History, Perspective on the Past*, p. 140.

by the Vandals. These Germanic people from Europe quickly set about invading the country under their leader Geiseric with as many as 80 thousand settlers in Tow. They sacked Cyrenaica in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Berenice suffered enormous damage during the Vandal's invasion. Even the subsequent Byzantine rule was deeply unpopular not least because taxes were increased dramatically in order to pay for military up keep while Berenice and other cities were left to decay.<sup>229</sup>

Civilization in Berenice was almost extinct due to depopulation under the emperor Trojan in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century fearful of a Jewish rising and its equally fearful suppression. The towns were deserted and prey to marauding bands of Berbers. Berber peasantry was exploited by crushing taxation and were keen for new rule. The official church had alienated the mass of the population by its intransigent attitude to what it considered as heresies.<sup>230</sup>

It was only on the basis of power and control over many nations in Asia, Europe and Africa that the oppressors successfully continued to transfer their guilt to the oppressed. All nations who had either failed to conquer Greece, Rome or other countries in the west or those who did not succeed to prolong their control on them were designated as barbarians or brutes while innumerable inhuman and barbarous crimes of the Romans and the Greeks were presented as benevolent efforts to promote civilization freedom and peace. So far as humaneness is concerned the same did not extend beyond the citizens of Rome. People in the lands conquered by them were neither acknowledged as full human beings nor did they deserve the human rights.

The later successors of Rome tenaciously upheld the same traditions of Romans throughout their colonies in Africa, Australia, America, South East Asia and in other colonies in the Pacific. The slave trade and treatment with the slaves as well as the original inhabitants of the American and Australian continents at the hands of the

<sup>229</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'History of Benghazi'.

<sup>230</sup> ibid.

Spanish, Portuguese, Belgian, Dutch, German, French and British colonists are well recorded in the annals of history. Such, inhuman activities of the most civilized nations in the world was not the matter of some distant past. Perhaps the most glaring example of the atrocities of the Americans and their allies can be found in brutish and indiscriminate bombing and massacre of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children throughout Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the last century entering into the 21<sup>st</sup> century AD. Syria and Libya and Palestine are still the worst sufferers of intervention and destruction at the hands of foreign powers. The Americans and their allies tested the most destructive newly invented explosive devices and chemicals on human beings, trees, crops and foliage in the afore-stated lands. No human beings believing in any God could have recklessly suffocated such a large number of Afghans by transporting them packing into containers meant for transportation of goods. The uncalled for invasion of Iraq as well as Afghanistan, destruction of life and property shows an utter lack of human values in these so-called torch-bearers of Civilization. Similarly, the stories of inhuman torture with the prisoners at Guantánamo Bay will continue to serve as a slur on the face of civilization of the Americans.

Reverting to the story of Carthage, we observe that in the aftermath of Cannae, Scipio Africanus crucified Roman deserters and had non-Roman deserters thrown to the beasts. The Senate refused to ransom Hannibal's Roman captives: instead, they made drastic preparations:

In obedience to the Books of Destiny, some strange and unusual sacrifices were made, human sacrifices amongst them. A Gaulish man and a Gaulish woman and a Greek man and a Greek woman were buried alive under the Forum Boarium ... They were lowered into a stone vault, which had on a previous occasion also been polluted by human victims, a practice most repulsive to Roman feelings. When the gods were believed to be duly propitiated ... Armour, weapons, and other things of the kind were ordered to be in readiness, and the ancient spoils gathered from the enemy were taken down

from the temples and colonnades. The dearth of freemen necessitated a new kind of enlistment; 8,000 sturdy youths from amongst the slaves were armed at the public cost, after they had each been asked whether they were willing to serve or no. These soldiers were preferred, as there would be an opportunity of ransoming them when taken prisoners at a lower price.<sup>231</sup>

## Roman Slave Trade

We quote a long passage from William Blair shedding light on the slave trade of the Romans in the following:

In the East, at an early period, the principal *emporium* for slaves, from the extensive Scythian regions, were Panticapaeum, Dioscurias, and Phanagoria all on the Euxine or Black Sea. Constant wars, among the tribes of Caucasus, furnished many captives, and Scythia itself was so great a magazine of slaves, that Scythian almost became another word for slave. It is not clear, whether the Romans went for slaves, directly to these cities on the Black Sea, although Panticapaeum and Dioscurias were still of importance in the time of Strabo but, it is certain, That the Roman slave-trade, in that part of the world, was chiefly carried on at Delos, That island rose into importance, as a commercial place, after the fall of Corinth, and grew an *entrepot*, for trade of every sort, between the East and West, but principally for that in slaves. It was resorted to by the Romans more than by any other people, and the slave-trade which they encouraged was so brisk, that the port became proverbial for such traffic, and was capable of importing and re-exporting 10,000 slaves in a single day. The Cilician pirates made Delos the great staple, for sale of their captives which was a very gainful part of their occupation. Sida, a city of Pamphylia, was another market for these robbers, for the disposal of their prisoners, whom they sold there, avowing them openly to be freemen. The pirates of Cilicia were put down by Pompey, who burnt 1,300 of their ships; but the eastern part of the Mediterranean was never free from piratical adventurers, by whom captives, for sale or ransom, were considered valuable booty.<sup>232</sup>

From the above, the readers may know about the earliest well recorded large scale slave-trade, the main suppliers and purchasers of slaves and the pirates in the world. It has been further reported that:

Various provinces of Asia, but, most of all, Phrygia and Syria'

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<sup>231</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Gladiator'.

<sup>232</sup> William Blair, p. 25-26.

furnished slaves to Rome. Medians, Maesians, and Bithynians, are also frequently mentioned. The Getae came from the country a little to the eastward of Pontus. The Davi are thought, by Strabo to be the same with the German Daci; but Salmasius shews, that the former were more probably an Oriental race. Alexandria appears to have been a considerable place of sale, for slaves of certain kinds, who were natives of the neighbouring districts of Egypt ; and it must also have been the most convenient port for shipment of slaves from Ethiopia. Thrace was the parent country of a number of slaves: and a considerable slave-trade was carried on, in the Augustan age, between the inhabitants of the east coast of Italy, and the Illyrians whose cargoes were probably made up, in part, from the savage tribes in their vicinity: the Galatians, too, were great slave-dealers at a later period.<sup>233</sup>

## **Britishers as Suppliers of Slaves**

Britain supplied slaves, down to a late period; and historians have often repeated the singular anecdote told by Bede of Gregory the Great having been moved to suggest the conversion of our ancestors, by the sight of many fine English youths exposed to sale in the market of Rome. Some slaves were drawn from the rest of Europe, although neither so constantly, nor in so great numbers, as from Asia and Africa; and we cannot now be sure of any places at which the European slave-trade was carried on, except those already mentioned.<sup>234</sup>

The most regular supply of valuable slaves, to the Italian market, was, originally, procured through trade. Other nations, no doubt, sold to the Roman dealers, slaves taken in wars with which Rome had not been concerned. In most countries, too, it was common for parents to sell their children into slavery. When the privileges of Roman citizenship were highly esteemed, and rarely obtained, it was not unusual for the allies to give their children, as slaves, to masters in Rome, on condition of their being ultimately manumitted, and so made to participate, as freedmen, in the envied advantages of citizens; until the practice was checked, by a special enactment, in a.u.c. 573.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> *ibid*, p. 27-28.

<sup>234</sup> *ibid*, p. 28-29.

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*, p. 29-30.

## Magnitude of Slavery in Greco-Roman Empires

The magnitude of slavery in the Greco-Roman Empires can be assessed from the following.

The writer of the '*Slavery Amongst the Romans*' observes that:

The free Athenians amounted apparently, to 120,000 or little more and slaves to 400,000. At Sparta, there were about 150,000 citizens and 500,000 slaves; but Thucydides observes that the Spartans had more slaves than any other Grecian state.<sup>236</sup>

Different writers in the ancient periods had given their estimates about the number of slaves held by each free citizen in Athens. In Note No. 1 of the book *Slavery Amongst the Romans*, we find:

According to one interpretation of a passage in Athenaeus, there were twelve slaves to each free person, in Athens: while Hume, on the other hand, would reduce the proportion rather below two to one.<sup>237</sup>

It is rather surprising, that Potter takes the whole free population of Athens to be included in the 21,000 ; **while he throws no doubt on the number of slaves being 400000—there being, thus, a proportion of nineteen slaves to one free person.**<sup>238</sup>

It has been said that the Romans, after the fall of Samnites at Aquilonia, sold 36000 of the slaves captured by them. The number of the people of Epirus taken and sold for behoofs of the army, under Paulus Aemilius, was 150000. On the great victory of Marius and Catullos over the Cimbri, 60,000 were captured.

Julius Caesar is said, by Plutarch and Appian, to have taken, in his Gallic wars alone, no fewer than **a million of prisoners;** a statement which is, no doubt, much exaggerated, but which shews, that the number was considered to be great; perhaps, we may adopt the estimate of Velleius Paterculus, who says, merely, that they exceeded 400,000.<sup>239</sup>

<sup>236</sup> *ibid*, p. 8-9.

<sup>237</sup> *ibid*, p. 207.

<sup>238</sup> *ibid*, p. 208.

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*, p. 19-20.

During the decline of the empire, the proper slave population appears to have diminished. Wealthy individuals continued still to possess numerous bodies of slaves, as St. Chrysostom says, that, under Theodosius the Great and Arcadius, some had 2000 or 3000. Synesius complains, (to the Emperor Arcadius,) that every family of tolerable means kept Scythian slaves of luxury; and Ammianus Marcellinus informs us, that **luxurious ladies and great men used to have 400 or 500 servile attendants.**<sup>240</sup>

Individuals owned thousands of slaves. **Pliny tells us that Saecilius a freed man of the time of Augustus left by his will as many as 4,116 slaves.** (...) He fixes the proportion of slaves to free men as that of 3 to 1 for the time between the conquest of Greece (146 B.C.) and the reign of Alexander Severus (A.D. 222-235).<sup>241</sup> The entire number in Italy would thus have been 20,832,000 in the reign of Claudius.

Ancient Sparta had a special type of serf-like helots. The helots were treated harshly and sometimes resorted to rebellions. According to Herodotus (IX, 28-29), helots were seven times as numerous as Spartans. Every autumn, according to Plutarch (Life of Lycurgus, 28, 3-7), the Spartan ephors would pro forma declare war on the helot population so that any Spartan citizen could kill a helot without fear of blood or guilt in order to keep them in line (*crypteia*).<sup>242</sup>

Due to a large number of slaves deported from the lands conquered by Rome during the centuries preceding the Christian Era, the slaves formed the main part of the workforce that ran the economy of Rome. Although the institution of slavery and the system of forced labor has always been imposed by the strong upon the weak in the world, yet Rome was perhaps the only country possessing the highest ratio of slaves as compared to the free citizens. By about 150 B.C., the enslavement of foreign population through military conquests had increased to such a proportion that the number of slaves far surpassed the citizens of Rome. While slavery has been considered against human dignity and causing

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<sup>240</sup> ibid, p. 14-15.

<sup>241</sup> Marcus Tullius, Pliny, *Letters and Treatises of Cicero and Pliny* (Cosimo Inc, 2000), 9:393 (footnote).

<sup>242</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Slave Rebellion'.

moral degradation in the society, the immoral effects of the institution were also disastrous for Rome.

The slaves were not considered as persons but property of their masters. They were treated harshly and oppressively. Owners could abuse, injure or kill their slaves without any fear of legal consequences. They were kept alive only for the benefit of their masters. Their services were utilized in the fields and mines and subjected to all type of hard physical labor according to the requirements of their masters. Due to high concentration and oppressive treatment with the slaves in the heartland and certain colonies of Rome, they felt depressed and deprived to such an extent that they rebelled against their masters repeatedly. Most conspicuous among such revolts were the first, second and the third servile wars.

Davis points out that until the fall of Constantinople cut off Christian Europe from the Black Sea this was the major source of slaves. Between 1414 and 1423 no fewer than 10,000 slaves were sold in Florence alone – Armenians, Circassians, Georgians, Mingrelians, Russians, Tatars, and Bulgarians – mostly women.<sup>243</sup>

## **Magnitude of Slavery in the Colonies**

Before the beginning of the French Revolution there were eight times as many slaves in the colony as there were white and mixed-race people put together. In 1789 the French were importing 30,000 slaves a year and there were half a million slaves in the French part of the island alone, compared to about 30,000 whites.<sup>244</sup>

## **Servile Wars**

Rome had gathered large number of slaves during their wars in Greece, Carthage, Asia Minor and many other states around the Mediterranean Sea. Their economy was, therefore, flourishing on the basis of cheap labor through slaves. The slaves were subjected to a miserable life without any rights and proper nourishment. The unrest and the tension of slaves,

<sup>243</sup> Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, p. 270.

<sup>244</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Slavery in Haiti'.

therefore, caused many revolts by them. Most important were the servile wars as described in the following:

The great servile war, however, in Italy, and the revolts of the slaves in Sicily, were very severe struggles, and cost the Republic, for their suppression, as much as the most formidable of its external enemies. The insurgent slaves in Sicily, under<sup>245</sup> Eunus, amounted to 70,000 men, of whom 20,000 are said to have fallen in their last defeat; and the rest to have been taken and crucified: but they had kept the field for six years, in the face of considerable forces, and at a time when Rome was very powerful, being ten years after the fall of Carthage. The second rebellion of the Sicilian bondsmen, was not so dangerous as the former, but lasted three years, before its termination, (a. u. c. 653,) by Marius Aquilius, the colleague of Cains Marius. The famous servile war in Italy, continued for nearly three years, and was not brought to a close without the greatest difficulty. The rebels must have amounted to a great number. If the accounts of the slain in their defeats are correct; since they lost 105,000 men, exclusively of those who fell, in their victories, over Lentulus, and other generals of the state: besides, after their main overthrow by Crassus, a body of 5,000 men was vanquished by Pompey. In the tenth year of the reign of Tiberius," a very dangerous plot was set on foot, to raise a rebellion of the slaves, in the district of Cales, near Brundisium: the insurgents were checked, by the accidental arrival of a naval force on that coast; but not before the capital had been filled with consternation.<sup>245</sup>

Amongst the minor outbreaks of slaves, which are noticed in history, was that of the slaves who joined Herdonius the Sabine,<sup>246</sup> and took the Capitol, in the third century from the building of Rome. A conspiracy of slaves, to burn the city, was detected in the year 335; and, about the year 55 of Rome, there was a rising of slaves in Etruria; but it does not appear to have been formidable. Some years later, Apulia was infested by gangs of robbers, who were all slaves, amounting to great numbers. The conduct of the servile wars in Italy and Sicily, evince a degree of discipline and skill, on the part of the rebels, which may, at first sight, appear astonishing; their numerical force, and their desperation, rendered them, Of course, highly formidable, in the heart of countries, more than half peopled by their fellows; but, above all, the number of gladiators in their ranks, supplied them, at once, with men,

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<sup>245</sup> Terence Sellers, *The Correct Sadist*, (Brighton: Temple Press Limited, England, 1990), p. 201-202.

trained in all the personal warfare of those days; so that, their speedy organization is easily to be accounted for; and officers were not likely to be wanting, since many slaves, like Spartacus and Eunus themselves, were captured soldiers.<sup>246</sup>

The first servile war of 135 BC lasted for about three years in Sicily. It was led by one Eunus a former slave claiming to be a prophet while a Sicilian named 'Cleon' was his military general. At one time these chiefs of slaves had gathered around them about 2,00,000 slaves including perhaps women and children. After some initial victories against the Romans the slave rebels stood utterly defeated and destroyed by the Roman armies.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> servile war (104-100 BC) too was an unsuccessful slave uprising against the Romans on the island of Sicily. Salvius was the leader of this rebellion. He amassed thousands of trained and equipped slaves including two thousand cavalry and 20 thousand infantry along with many men under the command of 'Athenian' from the west of Sicily. The rebellion was quelled by Roman council Manius Aquilas after great and prolonged effort.

## **Crown or Garland for the Queen**

No detailed description of the cruelties inflicted by the Romans on the slaves in the first and second servile wars is available; yet it is to be noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Servile War preserves perhaps the most horrifying demonstration of Roman brutality with the slaves fighting against them. The tragic incident occurred on Via Appia called the 'Queen of Roads' which was constructed in between Rome and Appia in about 312 BC was officially crowned or garlanded with 6000 crosses with rotting dead bodies throughout its length.

Spartacus (109-71 BC) was the most notable leader of the slaves in the third *Servile War*. He was leading the oppressed people fighting for their freedom against slave owning aristocracy of Rome. Spartacus reportedly belonged to nomadic stock of Thrace (present day southwestern Bulgaria, northeastern Greece) He is

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<sup>246</sup> William Blair, p. 202-203.

thought to have been a deserter from Roman army who was sold as a slave to a trainer of gladiators at Capua. Plutarch writes that Spartacus's wife, a prophetess of the same tribe was also enslaved with him. In 73 BC he escaped with 70 other gladiators and took refuge on Mount Vesuvius where he was joined by many other slaves increasing their number from 90,000 to 1,20,000 men.

In year 73 BC Spartacus and his companions defeated two Roman Armies while in year 72 BC they defeated another three armies of Rome. Eventually the Roman Senate sent eight legions i.e. about 40000-50000 of the trained Roman Soldiers led by Marcus Licinius Crassus who succeeded to besiege the renegades and killed a large number of the rebels on the battlefield. Similarly the legions under the command of Ganicus and Caustus separated from the main army killed about 12,300 of the slaves. Meanwhile Pompeii's army had returned from Spain and they too intercepted and killed many slaves who were escaping northwards. Eventually Spartacus' forces were finally routed completely with the vast majority of them being killed on the battlefield. It is believed that Spartacus died on the field but his body could never be found. The story ends in its most tragic part where the 6,000 survivors of slaves stood captured alive by the legions of Crassus who crucified all of them lining all the way from Rome to Capua. Another source records that:

Of the surviving slaves, 6000, whose masters could not be found were exhibited on crosses set up like telegraph posts along the whole length of the Via Appia.<sup>247</sup>

Emperor Hadrian had constructed an Amphitheatre at Santa Maria the real Old Capua. It has been described that:

It was near this site that Spartacus, a gladiator-slave, began the slave War in 73 BC. Marked for death in the arena, he had nothing to lose. He eventually gathered nearly 100,000 runaway slaves and so frightened the Romans establishment that, after

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<sup>247</sup> M. Cary, *A History of Rome*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. p. 242.

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killing Spartacus in battle, they set an example that was cruel even for them. Along the Appia, from Capua to Rome, they crucified 6,000 of Spartacus's followers."

Louis S. Glanzman has recorded the heart rending depiction of the barbarity of the Romans vide his painting appearing in the national geographic (Washington: June, 1981, p. 726-727). The following note appears beneath the painting:

Rebellion ended in agony for 6,000 slaves crucified on the Appia in 71 BC: led by the slave-gladiator Spartacus, an army of 100,000 runaways outfought Romans forces for nearly three years. Legionaries and their slaves strung the captured along the 132-mile route between Rome and Capua --- and left them to rot.

Isn't it a crime to conceal the facts from the people for such a long time? In spite of the fact that 2100 years have passed since the incident yet it had never been highlighted as a brutality before its depiction as quoted above. The historians and other literary figures did not even regret the greatest tragedy play performed in the open on Via Apia for beautification or crowning of the **so-called queen of the Roads**. The tragic display of the gruesome and lamentable naked bodies of the freedom fighters stretched over 6000 crucifixes and left there to rot all along the Road from Rome to Capua found no Mel Gibson or any one else to narrate or display "*The Passion*"<sup>248</sup> to rouse human sympathy over the sufferings and death awarded to freedom fighters in the most tragic and torturous manner. This was so because the victims were neither the Roman citizens nor sons of God. No doubt the crucifixion of Via Apia far exceeded the cruelty of the 'Via Crucis' or the way of the cross yet **it was impossible for any western writer to blame the Romans**. Even the compilers of the Gospels and their followers could not take the risk of incriminating Romans as Christ killers. This was so because propagation of anti-Semitism was the proper refuge as compared to incriminating the Romans with any indictment against them.

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<sup>248</sup> Mel Gibson's Film '*The Passion of the Christ*' (2004) and the book named '*Mel Gibson's Passion and Philosophy*' ed. George J. E. Grecia (Chicago: Open Court; and Illinois: La Salle, USA, 2004

The Gospels as well as other historical writings bear ample witness to the fact that like hundreds of other freedom fighters, **the Romans had crucified Jesus as a disturber of peace**. Being a Jew i.e. non-Roman citizen, Jesus was subjected to the ignoble death on cross which was reserved only for the slaves criminals and insurrectionists. The same was evident from the death note tied to his head. **It described the crime as 'The King of Jews'**. Crucifixion had been a routine matter for the Romans to get rid of the insurrectionists. They had killed thousands and thousands of Jews and their leaders prior to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Romans, therefore, had no sympathy for the convicts of political crimes. Jesus became the object of compassion only because the synoptic Gospels had absolved the Romans from the crime and after adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire Jesus had gained prominence as God of the Christians. As regards non-Roman citizens subjugated by them, they never accepted them as fully human nor had any remorse for ruthlessly killing millions of them.

St. Paul had ingeniously interpreted the death of Jesus as atonement for those who accepted him as their Lord (God). The Jewish race to which Jesus actually belonged stood condemned for eternal persecution and torment. No notice was taken of the facts on record that even according to Jesus, he had been sent only to retrieve the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus always worked among the Israelites and all the apostles chosen by him, his disciples and the companions belonged to his own race. He, therefore, left no stone unturned to rescue the Israelites till his death. It was long after his death that the gentiles or the Hellenized Christians started persecuting and stigmatizing the Jewish race as Antichrist.

It is also to be noted that the passion for Jesus is not for a Jew or a prophet who lived and died as a man in Palestine. Primarily, **it was the tragic death of the God of the gentiles that aroused pity and passion**

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**among the believers.** Being the successors of Rome they absolve themselves of the crime by incriminating the Jews. In spite of killing millions of the Jews, the revenge of the Christians has no satiation at all.

Human history with perhaps the exception of the Romans can produce no match for large scale torturous deaths which the Republicans engraved over the annals of history as an everlasting legacy of Rome. Although the historians in the West continue to admire the triumph of Rome over helpless human beings who gave their lives fighting for their freedom yet the brutal treatment of Rome with the oppressed people has no match for its barbarity in the world. No doubt, the display of the dead bodies of 6000 slaves left to rot on cross had been a display of their dominance over the world yet it had been a sign of terror than an object of worship as adopted by the Christians. **Cross had been the most hateful sign for the oppressed.** St. Paul was, therefore, the first theologian to interpret the cross in such a manner that instead of a disgusting sign of torture, curse and ignoble death, it became sanctified to be worshiped as a sign of glory, salvation and life everlasting for the Christians. The cross stood venerated as a symbol of success and the sign of salvation through Christ only under the authority of Constantine the Great.

St. Paul had continued to persecute the earliest and true followers of Jesus Christ for many years after the death of Jesus. Taking a sudden turn thereafter St. Paul started interpreting the events in such a manner that Jesus the helpless man and victim of crucifixion stood resurrected as God and savior of mankind. By promising extravagant benefits to the converts, St. Paul succeeded to win many followers. The Icon consisting of the Cross and the naked dead body of Jesus therefore became primary object of worship throughout the Roman Empire. Since then both the cross and the crucified are worshiped by the followers of St. Paul while Rome became the holy city, Christians the holy people of God to establish the Holy Roman Empire. God the father or the superannuated god of the Old Testament had to be pushed behind his young and more active son i.e. Jesus Christ.

**Ch. 6-**

# CONDITIONS OF SLAVES

## Sources of Slavery

There had been numerous sources of slavery in the ancient past. Most common among them had been the conquered people turned into slaves. William Blair reports that:

According to the Roman system, servitude was universally allowed to be the mere creature of the civil law, and to have no foundation in the law of nature. Persons were acquired as slaves by war, commerce, the operation of law in certain cases, and by their birth.<sup>249</sup>

The Romans, for a long time, had but one description of slaves and those were in a state of absolute servitude, in the strictest sense of the word.<sup>250</sup>

Slaves were usually divided into following categories.

- 1.** Serving Slaves. i.e. those who could be employed anywhere at the will of the master whether domestically or on outside jobs. Such slaves enjoyed no liberty at all.
- 2.** Husbandmen and tenants. Most of such slaves remained tied to the masters or land owned by them. Later on, in the feudal system, they were called serfs i.e. the agricultural labourers tied to working on their lord's estate. During the opportunities to be away from their masters, they also enjoyed some liberty.

Serfs were peasants under feudalism especially relating to manorialism. It was a condition of bondage which developed primarily during the high middle ages in Europe and lasted in some countries until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The term 'serfdom' was coined in 1850 which meant that formerly they were *servus* i.e. slave in Latin.

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<sup>249</sup> William Blair, p. 16.

<sup>250</sup> ibid, p. 49.

**Romans also had designated them as *coloni*.**<sup>251</sup> A freed slave became a serf usually through force of necessity. There also had been *cottagers* and *bordars* who ranked below a serf in the social hierarchy of manor. They held a cottage or extremely small piece of land extending from 1 to 5 acres. Others were farm laborers without land. Serfdom was at its peak during 6 to 12 centuries.

As regards rights of a serf, it was commonly said that a serf owned only his belly. Even his clothes were the property in law of his lord. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century serfdom was the dominant form of relation between Russian peasants and the nobility. It has been observed that:

In 1649 up to three-quarters of Muscovy's peasants, or 13 to 14 million people, were serfs whose material lives were barely distinguishable from slaves. Perhaps another 1.5 million were formally enslaved, with Russian slaves serving Russian masters.

**Russia's over 23 million privately held serfs were freed from their lords by an edict of Alexander II in 1861.** The owners were compensated through taxes on the freed serfs. State-owned serfs were emancipated in 1866.<sup>252</sup>

**3.** Slaves as captives of war. The condition of such slaves could be temporary or permanent in the event of nonpayment of the ransom for their freedom. Overall condition of all these types of slaves was extremely miserable.

**4.** Some of the people have been reported bartering their own liberty for money or subsistence. Man-stealing appears to have been at all times, a very prevalent crime amongst the ancients.

In very early times, a Roman father was entitled to put his children to death, as well as to expose, or to sell them. A law, 'ascribed to Romulus, confers, or recognises this extensive power, which is sanctioned also by the Twelve Tables. The right of deliberately killing their offspring, we may suppose, was but seldom exercised by parents, although it remained

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<sup>251</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Serfdom'. The famous word colony also seems to be derived from the *coloni* denoting a new settlement, an enslaved territory or people.

<sup>252</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Serfdom'.

part of the written law, till the reign of Alexander Severus.<sup>253</sup>

Suetonius informs us, that it had become so common to expose sick slaves, on the Isle of Esculapius in the Tiber, that the Emperor Claudius thought it necessary to repress that barbarity, by a law, to which our attention has been already called." Even during the existence of those restrictions imposed, by Augustus, upon manumission, avaricious masters availed themselves of the easy resource of emancipating such slaves as were burdensome to them; since the only penalty for leaving a freedman without aliment, was loss of patronage over him.<sup>254</sup>

But, we learn from laws and annals, that in calamitous times, the sale of children, by their indigent parents, was of frequent" occurrence. Constantine allowed a new-born infant to be sold, under the pressure of extreme want; but, at the same time, he authorised the parent, or any other person, to restore the child to ingenuity, by giving' to the buyer, his value, or another slave. The sale of children, in any need, was legalized' by Theodosius the Great; but, those sold into servitude were to be returned to their original ingenuous condition, whenever claimed, and without any compensation to their purchaser. They were often sold, avowedly, on account of debts due to the fisc which must have had a powerful effect in giving countenance to the practice. A little later, Valentinian III., in sanctioning the sale of children, during a severe famine,' ordered, that they should not be taken away from their purchaser, unless on repayment to him of the original price, and a fifth more; but Justinian reestablished the rule of Constantine.<sup>255</sup>

## 5. Servitude through Crimes

It has been reported that:

Free-born Romans might be reduced to slavery by the operation of law. Criminals doomed to certain ignominious punishments were, by effect of their sentence, deprived of citizenship, and sunk into a state of servitude. They were then termed "slaves of punishment," and belonged to the fisc,' in later times, whence we may judge them to have been the property of the public, during the commonwealth. This severe consequence was inferred by condemnation to death, or to the arena, or to labor, for life, in the mines, or the public works; and a pardon, or a remission of the penalty,' left the convict

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<sup>253</sup> William Blair, p. 32-33.

<sup>254</sup> ibid, p. 102.

<sup>255</sup> ibid, p. 34-35.

still a slave, unless he was restored to his former rank, by a special act of grace. But the condition of penal slaves was entirely abolished by Justinian. We must not omit here to mention, that, during the early persecutions of Christianity, reduction to slavery, in a very horrid form, was employed as a punishment for the embracing of our faith. **Female Christians were often condemned to be given up, as slaves, to the keepers of public brothels in Rome, in order to be subjected to open prostitution.**<sup>256</sup>

Islam permanently closed the door of reducing any free citizen to slavery on any charge, debt or excuse whatsoever. There could be no slaves of punishment in Islam. No arena existed in Islam nor could anyone be termed as a gladiator. There had been no provision in Islam to destroy slaves upon the theatre to entertain the Muslims nor could they be forced to combat with the wild beasts. Except for captives of war, no one could be held in the condition of slavery even temporarily. No women captives of war could ever be utilized as prostitutes.

**6.** Of old, those who did not give in their names for enrolment in the militia, were beaten, and sold into bondage beyond the Tiber, as unworthy to enjoy that liberty for which they were not ready to fight; and those who did not make proper returns to the censors, were liable to be visited with the same punishment.<sup>257</sup>

**7.** The penalty for theft was pecuniary, amounting to four times, or to twice the value of the stolen property, accordingly as the thief was caught in the fact, or was afterwards found to be guilty; and when the delinquent was too poor to make the payment required, he was adjudged, as a slave, to the injured party.' The same thing took place, where a person injured the property of another, and was unable to repair the damage. Originally, when a father was sued to pay for the theft, or mischief committed by his child, he was entitled to satisfy the claim by giving up the offender, to be the slave of the prosecutor; but a surrender of this sort [none deditio] was afterwards confined to the case of slaves.<sup>258</sup>

**8.** The extent of the power of creditors over their insolvent debtors, under the Roman system, has been a subject of much dispute. Even the life of the debtor is thought, by many, to have been forfeited to those whose just demands' he could

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<sup>256</sup> ibid, p. 38.

<sup>257</sup> ibid, p. 38.

<sup>258</sup> ibid, p. 39.

not meet There seems no reason to doubt, that, by the Twelve Tables, a bankrupt might, after certain formalities and delays, be put, by the judge, into the hands of his creditors, **with authority to them to cut him into pieces, or to sell him into servitude across the Tiber.**<sup>259</sup>

In Islam, you find no such rights of the creditors. God says:

If the debtor is In a difficulty, grant Him time till it is easy for Him to repay. but if ye remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if ye only knew.<sup>260</sup>

## 9. Laws Enforcing the Slavery

By the Claudian decree,<sup>261</sup> passed under Claudius. and re-issued, but probably amended, under Vespasian, it was enacted, that **a free-born woman, having an intrigue with another person's slave, should herself be made the slave of her paramour's master.**<sup>261</sup>

Here is a law passed by Athaleric, the Gothic Sovereign of Italy.

**It ordered, that any freewoman, becoming the concubine of a married freeman, should be given up, as a slave, to his offended wife.** In a like spirit, the edict of Theodoric declared, that the free-born seducer of a slave girl should, if he himself chose, or her owner pleased, become bound to remain united to the female, and to enter her master's service, nearly or wholly as a slave, without right of departing even after the woman's death. Free-born females, uniting themselves to men bound to the imperial manufactories, were made to fall into that class by a law of Gratian, which was not repealed by Justinian.<sup>262</sup>

Since a free-born female might, with impunity, form an improper connection with the slave of her freedman, or of her son. This law remained in force, throughout the empire, till it was mitigated by Theodosius II., in so far as regarded the children, and was, at last, entirely abrogated by Justinian.<sup>263</sup>

Islam is free from any such vicious injunctions.

<sup>259</sup> ibid, p. 38-41.

<sup>260</sup> Al-Qur'an 2:280 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>261</sup> William Blair, p. 42.

<sup>262</sup> ibid, p. 43.

<sup>263</sup> ibid, p. 42.

## **Plight of Slaves**

Modes of punishing slaves in the Roman Empire were especially ignominious and painful.

Crucifixion and hanging were, during a long time, reserved for slaves and the viler malefactors: **but, late in the empire, burning alive was employed**, amongst other barbarous means of satisfying the vengeance of the criminal code.<sup>264</sup>

It is worth noting here that there is no provision of crucifixion or burning alive any of the human beings. Only the Almighty has the authority to consign any malefactor to the Hell.

### Discontentment of the Slaves:

The early Roman Slave-masters frankly treated their staff as mere '**vocal instruments**', and relied upon the fear of punishment by scourging or chaining as a sovereign inducement to work. The food and clothing of the slaves, though adequate in quantity, were of the coarsest type; their sleeping-quarters often consisted of under ground chambers. Their work, besides being unending, was monotonous; opportunities of family life were denied to all except the bailiff; and their chances of eventually ransoming themselves out of their slender *peculium* or pocket-money were remote.<sup>265</sup>

Slaves could be flogged with any number of blows or lashes at the discretion of the master or the condemning judge. Bondsmen were often punished, by being loaded with chains or shackles.

## **Treatment of Slaves**

The exposure of children never met with adequate vengeance from the Roman laws. In remote times, it was thought not merely allowable, but proper, **that the sickly and deformed infants should be exposed; cruelty which was, no doubt, suggested by superstition**, as well as expediency, since the displeasure of the gods was supposed to be evinced by the infliction of decrepitude. Parents were, indeed, forbidden to expose healthy' children ; but, as no penalty was, till a long subsequent age, adjected to the violation of the law, it was little regarded; and poverty, or inconvenience, made the barbarous practice continue, with respect to both free-born

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<sup>264</sup> ibid, p. 60.

<sup>265</sup> M. Cary, *A History of Rome*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), p. 188.

and slave infants. But it came to be established, as a rule, that those fathers, or masters, who exposed their own, or their slaves' offspring, should lose their respective rights, and that the children should become the slaves of whoever chose to take them up and support them; it being competent, however, for the fathers, or masters, to recover them, at any after time, by paying the cost of their maintenance; Domitian, and after his example, Trajan, decided,<sup>266</sup> that all exposed children should be free and that no claim for their aliment should be allowed to the person who reared them ; but, under Diocletian, the old system was again in force, and Constantine revived it expressly, and allowed the bringer up of an exposed infant to retain it irredeemably, in the condition of his own child of a freedman, or of a slave, as he might please. At last, Justinian<sup>267</sup> reverted to the views of his earlier predecessors, and determined, that exposed children, of whatever class should be free.

## Run Away Slaves

The slave, when taken was severely punished, by authority of his master, or of the judge, at his desire; sometimes, **with crucifixion; amputation of a foot; or by being sent to fight, as a gladiator, or with wild beasts** but most frequently, by being branded on the brow, with letters indicative of his crime. When Constantine prohibited disfigurement of the countenance by branding, a slave, once fugitive, got fixed round his neck a **metal collar**, to which was attached a plate or label, with an inscription, making known the name and abode of the master, and requesting, that the wearer, if found in flight, might be brought back.<sup>267</sup>

Islam proscribed crucifixion and burning alive or dead by fire. There could be no amputation of foot or hand of a free person or a slave except through judgment of a Shariah court awarding punishment as per Islamic Law for crimes such as theft or robbery etc. No punishment could be awarded for very minor thefts especially involving the eatables. The Christians and Jews will be astonished to know that in certain cases of minor or major thefts by the slaves, the punishment was not inflicted on those who had not been properly looked after by their masters and dire needs of the slaves had

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<sup>266</sup> William Blair, p. 43-45.

<sup>267</sup> ibid, p. 110.

compelled them to steal the goods or the animals. The case of the slaves of al-Hatib bin Balt'a's slaves stealing his camels is one of such examples. The master of the slave was found committing cruelty with the slaves by not providing them the subsistence they deserved:

Once the slaves of al-Hatib bin Balt'a had participated in stealing a camel of a man from the tribe of Merina. They were brought before Umar and they confessed that they had done that. Umar ordered Katheer bin as-Salt to cut their hands. When they were taken to be punished, Umar brought them back and sent for their master's son Abdurrahman bin Hatib and said to him: "I swear by Allah, unless you have employed them and left them hungry, I would have cut their hands. By Allah, since I have not done so, I will impose a fine on you that will make you suffer much."<sup>268</sup>

Muslims had been prohibited branding of slaves. They also did not fix a metal collar or a plate to signify anyone as a slave.

As against the cruel practices of the old, Islam stressed equality of rights of all the human beings on earth while believers were directed to treat slaves as their brothers. No humiliation or inhuman treatment with slaves such as practiced by the Romans was permissible in Islam.

## **Gladiatorial Shows and Beast Hunts**

The procession in which Pompey displayed the spoils of his eastern conquests took two days to defile through the Via Sacra; Caesar entertained the people with three triumphs on successive days in 46, and with a fourth celebration in 45. Though gladiatorial contests were not yet admitted to the calendar of state functions, private performances at the cost of candidates for office were given with such frequency that the training of fighters for hire became a regular form of business enterprise: at the game which Caesar gave in 65 (the year of his aedileship) 320 pairs of combatants were exhibited. During his dictatorship Caesar varied the usual procedure of these contests by staging a *naumachia* or imitation naval battle on a large pond constructed for the purpose. The blood-lust of the populace was also stimulated by a great increase in the number of *venations*, at which wild animals from the remoter borders of the empire were pitted against each other or against professional huntsmen. Pompey

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<sup>268</sup>Allama Sharafuddin al-Musawi, *Al-Nass Wal-Ijtihad*, Chapter 2, ([al-islam.org](http://al-islam.org)).

gratified Roman playgoers by building a permanent theatre in stone. The dramatic performances were often the occasion for impromptu demonstration by the spectators, which politicians used as a means of feeling the public pulse.<sup>269</sup>

Islam, however, banned all blood sports of free people or slaves. It also disapproves fight shows of the predators or other wild beasts such as lions, tigers, bears, bulls, dogs etc.

For a better understanding of the background and the nature of the institution of gladiators, we quote certain passages from different sources explaining various aspects of the gladiators in the culture of Rome.

Rome was essentially a landowning military aristocracy. From the early days of the Republic, ten years of military service were a citizen's duty and a prerequisite for election to public office. *Devotio* (willingness to sacrifice one's life to the greater good) was central to the Roman military ideal, and was the core of the Roman military oath. It applied from highest to lowest alike in the chain of command. As a soldier committed his life (voluntarily, at least in theory) to the greater cause of Rome's victory, he was not expected to survive defeat.<sup>270</sup>

A gladiator (swordsman) usually a slave was an armed combatant who entertained audiences in the Roman Republic and Roman Empire in violent confrontations with other gladiators, wild animals, and condemned criminals. Some gladiators were volunteers who risked their lives and their legal and social standing by appearing in the arena. Most were despised as slaves, schooled under harsh conditions, socially marginalized, and segregated even in death. Irrespective of their origin, gladiators offered spectators an example of Rome's martial ethics and, in fighting or dying well, they could inspire admiration and popular acclaim.<sup>271</sup>

Gladiator Fights were probably religious in origin first held at funerals to honour the deceased. But by the time of the emperors, they were simply a blood sport which almost everyone enjoyed; there were only a few protesting voices. Gladiators were mostly slaves or criminals, and were well trained in special schools. If they were lucky, they survived to win their freedom. Many thought the gladiator's way of life

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<sup>269</sup> M. Cary, *A History of Rome*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, p. 457.

<sup>270</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Gladiator'.

<sup>271</sup> *ibid.*

was glamorous.<sup>272</sup>

In the shows of the amphitheatre, the greater the slaughter of the combatants, the greater was the satisfaction of the spectators: and we may have some idea of the frequency, and pitilessness with which these were exhibited, from the restriction imposed by Augustus, who forbade magistrates to give shows of gladiators above twice in one year, or of more than sixty pairs at a time. Other attempts had previously been made to limit the dangerous establishments of gladiators; but they must have been weak, as Julius Caesar exhibited at once 320 pairs. Tiberius restricted the number of combatants; but Caligula and Domitian violated the rules, and the shows were afterwards, often immoderate. Trajan exhibited them for 123 days in the course of which 10,000 gladiators fought.<sup>273</sup>

The intense excitement felt by the crowds at gladiatorial fights was vividly described by an appalled Seneca. In a famous letter, Seneca laments that the crowds are so lusty for the kill:

Quite by chance, I went to the noon spectacles, hoping for some light entertainment and something relaxing, where human eyes could relax from bloody slaughter. It was exactly the opposite. However the games were fought before, there was compassion. Now, with frivolities omitted, the games are outright murder. The men have nothing protecting them. Their entire bodies being exposed to the blows, no shot misses its mark. Many prefer this to the ordinary pairings and request matches. Who wouldn't prefer it? No helmet or shield repels the sword. What need of armour or skill? All these things simply postpone death. In the morning hours men are thrown to lions and bears, at noon to the spectators. They demand that the murderers be thrown to future murderers and that they detain the victor for other slaughter. The only way out of the fights is death, and it is accomplished by fire and the sword. These things all take place even when the arena is empty. 'Some committed robbery, some killed a man'. But what of it? Since he killed a man he is obliged to suffer his penalty, but what has made you, poor man, obliged to watch it? 'Kill him, whip him, burn him'. Why does he kill with such lack of enthusiasm? Why does he die with such little pleasure? Let him be forced with lashes to his wounds. Let them receive mutual blows on exposed and bare chests'. When there is an intermission at the spectacles: 'Meanwhile, let men have their

<sup>272</sup> Simon James, *Ancient Rome, Eyewitness Guides*, (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1991), p. 30.

<sup>273</sup> William Blair, p. 13-14.

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throats slashed so there is no lull in the action<sup>274</sup>

Shelton observes that:

The infliction of pain was an essential element of the execution, as was the humiliation and dehumanisation of the condemned, whose body was made ugly by mutilation, whose voice was reduced to non-verbal shrieks, and whose terror and agony provoked no sympathetic response from the crowd [those killed had] relinquished the privileges of membership in human society.<sup>275</sup>

It is said that the gladiator games lasted for nearly a thousand years reaching their peak between the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D. The earliest roman amphitheatre was built at Pompeii by Sullan colonists, around 70 B.C. The first part-stone amphitheatre in Rome inaugurated in 29–30 BC, in time for the triple triumph of Octavian (later Augustus). Shortly after it burned down in 64 AD, Vespasian began its replacement, later known as the *Amphitheatrum Flavium* (Colosseum), which seated 50,000 spectators and would remain the largest in the Empire. It was inaugurated by Titus in 80 AD the personal gift of the Emperor to the people of Rome, paid for by the Imperial share of booty after the Jewish Revolt.<sup>276</sup>

However, this extraordinary building was constructed for horrible purpose: to allow people to watch killing and bloodshed for amusement. Gladiators fought each other to the death, and other men fought animals from the four corners of the Roman world.<sup>277</sup>

Historians Keith Hopkins and Mary Beard tentatively estimate a total of **400 arenas throughout the Roman Empire** at its greatest extent, with a combined total of 8,000 deaths per annum from all causes, including execution, combat and accident.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Paul Monaghan, *Bloody Roman Narratives Gladiators*, (Art & Pain, Issue 4, UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, 2003)

<sup>275</sup> Paul Monaghan, Bloody Roman Narratives Gladiators.,

<sup>276</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Gladiator'.

<sup>277</sup> Simon James, *Ancient Rome, Eyewitness Guides*, (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>278</sup> Wikipedia, the Online Encyclopedia.

The games finally declined during the early 5<sup>th</sup> century after adoption of Christianity as state church of the Roman Empire in 380 A.D. In 393, Theodosius (r. 379–395) banned pagan festivals. The sources of supply of the gladiators had also been reduced by formation of new rules in the empire:

On the one hand, only slaves found guilty of specific offences could be sentenced to the arena, and citizens were legally exempt from this sentence. On the other hand, citizens found guilty of particular offenses could be stripped of citizenship, formally enslaved and sentenced as slaves; and freedmen or freedwomen offenders could be legally reverted to slavery. Arena punishment could be meted for banditry, theft and arson, or treasonous acts such as rebellion, census evasion to avoid paying due taxes and refusal to swear lawful oaths.<sup>279</sup>

## **Death Disposal and Remembrance**

The proximity of death defined the munus for all concerned. To die well, a gladiator should never ask for mercy, nor cry out. A "good death" redeemed a defeated gladiator from the dishonourable weakness and passivity of defeat, and provided a noble example to those who watched: For death, when it stands near us, gives even to inexperienced men the courage not to seek to avoid the inevitable. So the gladiator, no matter how faint-hearted he has been throughout the fight, offers his throat to his opponent and directs the wavering blade to the vital spot.<sup>280</sup>

## **Engines of Torment**

A vast variety of engines of torment were used by the Romans band, in so far as we can judge, from the mention made of them by ancient writers, little new, in the modes of inflicting pain, was devised by modern ingenuity, during any of the religious persecutions, or other too celebrated occasions, when such cruelty has been displayed, in more recent ages.<sup>281</sup>

We have an interesting reading in Terence Sellers' '*The Correct Sadist*' containing a chapter titled '*Basic Etiquette for the Slave*' and feel that the writer may not have produced the ground rules just on the basis of her own imagination. More probably, the rules seem to have

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<sup>279</sup> Wikipedia, the Online Encyclopedia.

<sup>280</sup> Wikipedia, the Online Encyclopedia.

<sup>281</sup> William Blair, p. 63.

certain reflections of the ancient past or even later periods. Here are the details:

These ground rules must be insisted upon by the Superior and obeyed from the start or else the slave is to be rejected as unfit material for manipulation.

**One:** He will at all times address the Superior as 'Mistress' or 'Master'. You may require him to use a variation on this title such as 'Divine Queen Goddess', 'Father Confessor', 'Supreme Being', as you like. He may not use the possessive pronoun, i.e. he may not say 'My Mistress' as he is the one owned.

**Two:** He may never present himself at full height but remains below the waist or knees of the Superior on his knees or belly. Enjoin him to keep his little paws to himself, at his sides or behind him. No other pose is acceptable.

**Three:** He may open his mouth only to answer direct questions, fetch, or receive dispensations. If he absolutely will irritate the Superior's ears he must ask permission to speak, which is in itself an act of disobedience.

**Four:** The slave ought to be compelled to appear in some form of humiliation-wear you have chosen. Standard humiliation-wear is the underwear of the opposite sex and will do until you designate a special role for him such as hooker, or baby, when he will be dressed accordingly.

**Five:** If he is employed as maid, try to relieve yourself of the bother of constantly ordering his inept person about by training him to anticipate your wishes. He will of course be punished for assuming too much, for trying to make his uselessness indispensable.

**Six:** Impress the slave that he ought to submit gratefully to your orders, whims and cruelties, that an incredibly fortunate intervention of fate has bestowed upon his pathetic person a purpose he never would have realized by himself. That the Superior considers him material amenable to manipulation ought to be a source of joy, for most slaves are so essentially worthless it is a waste of time trying to make anything of them.

**Seven:** Hammer it into his pea-brain that he has no Will but to do as the Superior commands him to do. The Superior may delegate this Authority to another whom he must obey as unconditionally as he would the beloved Superior in person. For the Superior knows best what the slavish soul needs, and unless he puts his full trust in Her influence he will remain a

craven dog without a home.<sup>282</sup>

## **Rights of the Masters**

The masters enjoyed absolute authority on their slaves while obedience of slaves was enforced by severe discipline:

The industry of slaves was excited, and their obedience enforced, by severe discipline. The law allowed vast latitude to masters; and they availed themselves of it to the utmost. A blow with the hand "was the readiest mode of expressing displeasure; but the lash and the rod were most frequently employed, for domestic correction and as stimuli to activity. If a slave spoke, coughed, or sneezed, at forbidden times, he was flogged by a very severe master. (...) In a subsequent age, three hundred lashes was, often, the amount of punishment' awarded, for very trifling faults, which, more generally, drew down a sentence of between thirty and fifty stripes.<sup>283</sup>

By the original Roman law the master was clothed with absolute dominion over the slave, extending to the power of life and death, which is not surprising when we consider the nature of the *patria potestas*. The slave could not possess property of any kind; whatever he acquired was legally his master's. He was, however, in practice permitted to enjoy and accumulate chance earnings or savings, or a share of what he produced, under the name of peculium. A master could not enter into a contract with his slave, nor could he accuse him of theft before the law; for, if the slave took anything, this was not a subtraction, but only a displacement, of property. The union of a male and female slave had not the legal character of a marriage; it was a cohabitation (*contubernium*) merely, which was tolerated, and might be terminated at will, by the master; a slave was, therefore, not capable of the crime of adultery.<sup>284</sup>

It is worth noting here that no stripes or flogging of human beings was permissible in Islam except where ordained by the Shariah law. Such flogging of slaves could only be made under the decision of Shariah court for free people as well as the slaves.

<sup>282</sup> Terence Sellers, *The Correct Sadist*, (Brighton: Temple Press Limited, England, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>283</sup> William Blair, p. 106-108.

<sup>284</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 776.

No master could, therefore, punish the slave with the stripes or inflict any serious injury on him because it would either attract the freedom of the slave or an adequate punishment to the master.

Zadhan Abl Umar reported: I came to Ibn 'Umar as he had granted freedom to a slave. (...) (and said) I heard Allah's Messenger say: **He who slaps his slave or beats him, the expiation for it is that he should set him free.**<sup>285</sup>

Mu'awiya b. Suwaid reported: I slapped a slave belonging to us and then fled away. I came back just before noon and offered prayer behind my father. He called him (the slave) and me and said: Do as he has done to you. He granted pardon. (...).<sup>286</sup>

As against this, the Romans knew no limits to inflict punishment on the slaves e.g.

Cruel masters sometimes hired torturers by profession, or had such persons in their establishments," to assist them in punishing their slaves, or in extorting confessions from them,' and many horrible torments were employed for those purposes. The noses and ears, or teeth of slaves, were often in danger from an enraged owner, and sometimes the eyes of great offenders were put out. Crucifixion was, very frequently, made the fate of a wretched slave, for trifling misconduct, or from mere caprice. Slaves were commonly called on, to act as the executioners of their fellows; and we do not discover any regulation which prevented or discountenanced the forcing of the victim's relatives or friends, to perform that horrid office. The master or mistress, appears to have usually superintended the infliction of punishment.<sup>287</sup>

As stated earlier, Islam strictly forbade believers to punish the slaves severely. **In no case could they put out the eyes of the slaves or crucify them.** Those who violated the injunctions of Islam qualified themselves for similar retribution from the Islamic court.

Roman treatment with the slaves is evident from the following:

Slaves were, like any other moveable property, liable to be pledged, or given in security, for borrowed money; and while

<sup>285</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 8, Book 15, Hadith Number 4078:

<sup>286</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 8, Book 15, Hadith Number 4081:

<sup>287</sup> William Blair, p. 111-112.

the credit or held them in his hands, he was invested with all the powers of their master, in so far as necessary to enforce obedience. At the same time, the creditor might be made to suffer from the diminution in value of a pledged slave, whom he had punished undeservedly. Slaves might also be seized and sold, for payment of debts; or confiscated, as part of the estate of a criminal.<sup>288</sup>

While the Republic endured, the legal character of slavery remained uniform, and unmitigated. We need not point out each of the many ways, in which the master might exercise his rights over his slave; some of the most important will occur to us, in reviewing the gradual curtailments of those rights. Suffice it, here, to observe, that the slave had no protection against the avarice, rage, or lust of the master, whose authority was founded on absolute property; and that the bondsman was viewed, less as a human being, subject to arbitrary dominion, than as an inferior animal, dependant wholly on the will of his owner.<sup>289</sup>

**In Islam a slave was fully human and enjoyed all the basic rights except freedom.** No cruelty could ever be inflicted on the slave nor could they be subjected to any torment or harsh labor:

Narrated Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid: I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghfari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet . The Prophet asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job).<sup>290</sup>

At first, the master possessed the uncontrolled power of life and death: he might kill, mutilate, or torture his slaves, for any or no offence : he might force them to become gladiators, or prostitutes: the temporary unions of male with female slaves, were formed and dissolved, at his command: families and friends, were separated, when he pleased : the laws recognised no obligation upon the owner of slaves, to furnish them proper food and clothing, or to take care of them in

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<sup>288</sup> ibid, p. 89-90.

<sup>289</sup> ibid, p. 76-77.

<sup>290</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Hadith Number 721:

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sickness.<sup>291</sup>

Readers will observe that Islam strictly outlawed all atrocities or inequities against the slaves.

Abu Hurairah reported that the Apostle of Allah (may Peace be upon him) said: **Slaves should be fed and clothed according to custom and work beyond their capacity should not be taken from them.**<sup>292</sup>

## Restraint on Manumission

The entire history of Rome does not show any enactment of law to reduce their miseries or to promote wellbeing of the slaves. The only law curtailing the rights of masters was to restrain them from the unlimited and indiscriminate manumission of the slaves. The said law passed by Augustus, therefore, abolished all the chances of freedom of the slaves.

The power of masters over their slaves, suffered very important diminutions during the Empire. Augustus restrained the right of indiscriminate and unlimited manumission, by laws which were not repealed, nor much altered, for centuries.<sup>293</sup>

The condition of slavery, among the Romans, was perpetual : and slaves could not throw it off, by any acts of their own; with but one exception, introduced in a late age of the Empire when a slave could, by living for 30 or 20 years, as a freeman, acquire his full liberty, through prescription.' Otherwise, the rights of a master, once lawfully constituted, could not be extinguished, but by his formal renunciation, or obvious abandonment of them.<sup>294</sup>

It is, however, said that slaves were at all times competent to avail themselves of the temporary protection of sanctuaries. About the Christian era, it has been claimed:

A Christian church afforded very great safety from the wrath of unmerciful owners: for when a slave took refuge there, it became the duty of the ecclesiastics to intercede for him,

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<sup>291</sup> William Blair, p. 77.

<sup>292</sup> *Muatta Imam Malik*, tr by M. Rahimuddin, Ch. 573, Hadith No. 1776.

<sup>293</sup> William Blair, p. 83-84.

<sup>294</sup> ibid, p. 162.

with-his master; and if the latter refused to pardon the slave, they were bound not to give him up, but to let him live within the precincts of the sanctuary, till he chose to depart, or his owner granted him forgiveness.<sup>295</sup>

The tradition of life-long slavery existed in the Romans as well as other countries in the world. Credit goes to Islam for treating slaves as brethren of the Muslims who had always been manumitting them on various causes or excuses. Here is one of such examples.

Narrated Qais: When Abu Huraira accompanied by his slave came intending to embrace Islam, they lost each other on the way. (When the slave showed up) Abu Huraira said (to the Prophet), "I make you witness that the slave is free for Allah's Cause."<sup>296</sup>

This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Zuhri with the same chain of transmitters that a person broke fast in Ramadan whereupon the Messenger of Allah commanded him to free a slave (as an atonement), and the rest of the hadith is the same as narrated by Ibn Uyaina.<sup>297</sup>

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: Of the dinar you spend as a contribution in Allah's path, or to set free a slave, or as a sadaqa given to a needy, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family.<sup>298</sup>

Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger as saying: If anyone emancipates a Muslim slave, Allah will set free from Hell an organ of his body for every organ of his (slave's) body.<sup>299</sup>

## **Complaints of Slaves**

No Roman law was ever enacted to punish a master for severe injuries or death caused to his slaves. It has, however, been asserted that:

Antoninus Pius, borrowing a highly salutary Athenian law on the same subject, empowered the judge, who should be satisfied of a slave's complaint, about his ill treatment, being well founded, to- force the owner to sell him to some other

<sup>295</sup> *ibid*, p. 89.

<sup>296</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Hadith Number 709:

<sup>297</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 14, Book 35, Hadith Number 2460:

<sup>298</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 12, Book 5, Hadith Number 2181:

<sup>299</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 15, Book 9, Hadith Number 3602:

master.<sup>300</sup>

Look at the highly salutary Athenian law which grants no relief to the slave nor admonishes the master to treat his slave in a kind manner. All the slave could achieve after prolonged efforts and a sheer good luck was that he could be sold to some other master who could be more cruel even than the first one. Islamic courts, on the other hand, never showed any relaxation towards a cruel master nor did they decide any case except providing the requisite relief to the slave.

Neither Augustus nor Antoninus laid down precise rules for determining what acts of harshness, on the master's part, should warrant the interposition of the magistrate, to protect the slave ;-the judge was left, entirely, to his own discretion, in estimating the excess of rigor: but, the sort of cruelty pointed at by both these Emperors, was that practised, not on the mental, but on the bodily feelings of the slave; by deficiency of food, or of clothing, by over-work, or undue severity of correction.<sup>301</sup>

A slave could not receive a legacy from his deceased master, unless it was accompanied by a bequest of freedom; but if named heir, he took up the inheritance, and had liberty by implication, if it had not been specially left to him; but a legacy left by a stranger to a slave, might be wholly repudiated by the master, to whom it would have come had he pleased. When 'any injury was done to a slave, his master was entitled (by the Aquilian law) to reparation from the offending party; and it has been thought, this might be recovered, even from a municipal magistrate,' who had over-punished, slave.

The master might transfer his rights, by either sale or gift, or might bequeath them by will; and he could renounce them, so as to set the slave at liberty. But it is particularly remarkable, that the powers of the master were to survive himself. A slave, being a chattel, or article of moveable property, we are not surprised at one owner's being permitted to put another into his place; but then, we expect to find the word master unfettered in his authority, unless, perhaps, as to time, by a stipulation for enfranchisement of the slave at a certain period.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> William Blair, p. 84.

<sup>301</sup> ibid, p. 85.

<sup>302</sup> ibid, p. 78-79.

## No Human Rights for Slaves

Slaves were not acknowledged as persons or individuals in the Roman Law. They were merely a movable property of the master. In case of any injury or death to a slave, only the master had the power to sue the aggressor to make up for the loss or damage to his property. Before the times of Augustus, there had been no diminution in the unlimited powers of the masters.

The original condition of slaves, in relation to freemen, was as low as can be conceived. They were not considered members of the community, in which they had no station nor place. 'They possessed no rights, and were not deemed persons in law; so that they could neither sue, nor be sued, in any court of civil judicature, and they could not invoke the protection of the tribunes. So far were those notions carried, that when an alleged slave claimed his freedom, on the ground of unjust detention in servitude, he was under the necessity of having a free protector to sue for him, till Justinian' dispensed with that formality.<sup>303</sup>

In this respect, we produce once again the Hadith quoted earlier.

Narrated Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid: I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghfari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet . The Prophet asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job).<sup>304</sup>

## Denial of Paternity and Nuptial Relations of Slaves

According to the Roman Law slaves could not enter into matrimony nor had any rights on their children. There was no lawful matrimony among slaves. A master could

<sup>303</sup> ibid, p. 51-52.

<sup>304</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Hadith Number 721:

forbid his slaves to marry and could also separate the spouses when he chose.

While the civil law and courts were very unfavorable to slaves, as we have seen, the criminal code and tribunals were no less so. When the master had unlimited power of life and death, the slave was little protected, in person, from the violence of others. 'A law of the Twelve Tables, which imposed fines upon those guilty of assault, fixed the amount, in case of a slave being the party hurt, at half that threatened, when a freeman was the sufferer; and the rates were so trifling, that they soon ceased to operate as punishment. The killing, maiming, or debauching' of a slave was viewed and punished by the laws, merely as an injury to the master, at whose instance only a prosecution for it could be brought; and the master could not prosecute the aggressor, whatever insult and pain had been caused to the slave, if no serious injury had been done him, till this was remedied by a law of Severus.<sup>305</sup>

The same writer further reports that:

Slaves could not enter into matrimony," even with parties of their own rank, their union with whom was of an imperfect nature, violation of which was not accounted adultery; the Christian church itself did not maintain openly the validity of slave nuptials, till after the period embraced by this treatise.

**Attempts of free persons to form marriage with slaves were severely punished.** Slaves had not the usual paternal power over their children, and no ties of blood among slaves were recognized, except in respect to incest, and parricide, which were regarded with horror by the law of nature;<sup>306</sup>

In contrast to this the Qur'ān enjoins that:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among yourselves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompassteth all, and he knoweth all things.<sup>307</sup>

We also find instructions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) that:

Narrated Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari: Allah's Apostle said, "If a person teaches his slave girl good manners properly, educates her properly, and then manumits and marries her, he will get

<sup>305</sup> William Blair, p. 55-56.

<sup>306</sup> ibid, p. 52.

<sup>307</sup> A-Qur'ān 24:32 Yusuf Ali.

a double reward. And if a man believes in Jesus and then believes in me, he will get a double reward. And if a slave fears his Lord (i.e. Allah) and obeys his masters, he too will get a double reward.”<sup>308</sup>

## No Uniformity of Law

The Roman penal laws differed in accordance with the rank and social status of the culprit. People of the lower ranks could be punished more severely than those enjoying higher political or social status.

In administering their penal laws, **the Romans made the rank of the offender, the measure of his punishment;** and provisions to that effect, are in most of those laws which still exist. **The lower the culprit, the more severe was the pain.** In some circumstances, guilt was attached to slaves, by presumption of law. By a decree passed by the senate, under Nero, if a master was murdered where his slaves might possibly have aided him, **all of his household within reach, were held as implicated, and deserving of death,**<sup>309</sup>

**Islam, however, abolished all such discrimination.**

Any person from a king to an ordinary peasant was subject to the same punishment irrespective of their family, background, social status, wealth or poverty.

Narrated 'Aisha: The people of Quraish worried about the lady from Bani Makhzum who had committed theft. They asked, "Who will intercede for her with Allah's Apostle?" Some said, "No one dare to do so except Usama bin Zaid the beloved one to Allah's Apostle." When Usama spoke about that to Allah's Apostle Allah's Apostle said, (to him), "Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with Allah's Prescribed Punishments?" Then he got up and delivered a sermon saying, "What destroyed the nations preceding you, was that if a noble amongst them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's Legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand."<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 55, Hadith No. 655:

<sup>309</sup> William Blair, p. 59.

<sup>310</sup> *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, (Dar Al Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980) Volume 4, Book 56, Number 681:

## Severe Restraints on Slaves

According to the Roman Law, slaves were incapable of holding any property. They also could not hold a public office nor were they entitled to join army which usually consisted only of the freeborn people. Slaves were prohibited from learning the liberal arts. They were forbidden to wear particular articles of dress as assigned to freeborn Romans. Public baths were closed against the servile population. Slaves were also debarred from the use of carriages, horses or litters within the walls of the city.<sup>311</sup>

In contrast to the Roman traditions Islam did not impose any such restraints on the slaves. They were fully entitled not only to use horse carriages and enjoy other facilities available to them but they also could share riding the camel even with the caliphs of Islam like Omer the Great while traveling from Medina to Jerusalem in about 638 AD.

Islam did not debar a slave to own personal property whether purchased through his own income or gifted by his master or others. Similarly, there was no legal restriction on their learning the liberal arts or other specialties available in the society. They were fully entitled to hold public office and to join army. Slaves or ex-slaves had, therefore, been leading great armies since the time of the holy Prophet (pbAh) and during all other times till the institution of slavery was banned through Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. There being no restrictions on their rising to the highest positions, many of the slaves became the Sultans, the Kings or the Emirs of the Muslim community.

Zaid bin Hartha, Usama bin Zaid, Musa bin Nusair, Tariq bin Zyad, Ahmad bin Tauloon, Mahmood Ghaznavid, Qutb al-Din Aybak in India, Imad al-Din Zangi, Nur-ul-Din Zangi, Sultan Bybris are glaring examples of slaves or ex-slaves rising to the ranks of the chiefs of Muslim

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<sup>311</sup> William Blair, p. 53-55.

army while some of them formed Mamluk Dynasties in India, Iraq and Egypt etc.

Musa bin Nusair a governor and a general of Muslim army serving the Umayyad dynasty had been the son of Nusair a freed slave of Caliph Abd al Aziz bin Marwan. Similarly, general Tariq bin Zyad was a freed slave of Sadaf Clan of Kinda. Both these generals were the conquerors of al-Andalus or Spain.

Islam is, therefore, the only religion in which the slaves or the Mamluks had been reigning vast regions on earth. As against this the Romans did not allow the slaves to use two names or one name consisting of two parts. The single names were usually given to them by their masters.<sup>312</sup> Islam abolished all such restrictions on them.

## **The Testimony of the Slaves**

Since the slaves were not acknowledged as persons in the law of the Romans, therefore, their testimony was not valid except as detailed below:

The testimony of slaves was received to a certain extent, among the Romans. But positive law<sup>313</sup> appointed the credibility of witnesses to be, in great measure, determined, by the bare circumstance of their rank in society; and slaves, together with very low free people, were, in later times, seldom examined except under torture, although that mode of proof was sometimes reprobated. (...) Freemen were, of old, not liable to be tortured, in civil causes, at all; not in criminal proceedings, unless convicted culprits; or parties against whom, there was partial proof; or witnesses, strongly suspected of being accomplices.<sup>313</sup>

We cannot say, with certainty, whether slaves could be examined, in cases where their natural relatives were concerned: but we may presume, that they could not; at least, under the later Emperors. A general rule made slaves inadmissible witnesses for or against their owner, or his children: but from this were always excepted, cases of incest, adultery, and treason, 'or other state crimes; since, in the two first, other evidence could hardly be procured, where all domestics were slaves ; and in the last, the danger of the

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<sup>312</sup> William Blair, p. 116.

<sup>313</sup> ibid, p. 62-63.

crime outweighed ordinary considerations.<sup>314</sup>

Although the testimony of a slave was not acceptable as valid in any court of law yet during the inquisition period, it became acceptable for accusing or persecuting the suspected heretics in the Christian countries. It has been reported that:

During the persecutions of the early Christians, the usual rule, in this respect, was often violated: and, on the other hand, after the establishment of Christianity as the national religion, when heresy came to be dreaded as much as treason, slave testimony 'was equally received, with regard to the one as to the other. Slaves were allowed, and often invited, to inform against some offenders; but were threatened with punishment, for bringing accusations against their masters,' except in state crimes or heresy; and some Princes rejected their denunciations of their owners, even in alleged conspiracies.<sup>315</sup>

The interment of a slave in any place, made the spot religiosus and the superstition of the Romans acknowledged the existence of the shades, or manes, of slaves. The posthumous honor of a funeral banquet, was, by the Twelve Tables, forbidden to be paid to slaves; but that law, like another<sup>316</sup> against anointing the corpses of slaves, was purely sumptuary, and shews in itself, that the ceremony had formerly been allowed to them.

## Reformatory Efforts

Here are certain reformatory efforts made by certain Roman Despots:

**The master's power of life and death over his slaves, was, first, sought to be legally abolished, by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.** Before the existence of laws sufficient to repress the excessive tyranny of slave-owners, extraordinary steps were taken by Augustus, and by Hadrian, to mark their reprobation of the odious barbarity with which slaves were, in some instances, treated. The reproof given, by the former of those Princes, to Vedia Pollio, for condemning equally with the slaying of another person's bondsman a slave to a horrid death, on account of accidental mischief, is well known ; and the latter Emperor

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<sup>314</sup> *ibid*, p. 63-64.

<sup>315</sup> *ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>316</sup> *ibid*, p. 69-70.

banished a lady of rank, because she was notoriously cruel to her slaves. Constantine<sup>317</sup> placed the wilful murder of a slave, on a level with that of a freeman,<sup>3</sup> and expressly included the case of a slave who died under punishment, unless that was inflicted with the usual instruments of correction. But the effect of this humane rule, was done away by an after enactment of Constantine himself, and the more unfavorable<sup>3</sup> law was retained in the Theodosian code. And in the fifth century, Salvianus I assures us, that, in the Gallic provinces at least, men still fancied, they had a right to put their slaves to death. Several councils of the church endeavored to repress slave murder, by threatening the perpetrators with temporary excommunication;<sup>3</sup> at last, Justinian rejected from his code, the less humane, and preserved the other of Constantine's two decrees, which we have noticed. By a law of Claudius, a master who exposed his sick or infirm slaves, forfeited all rights over them, in the event of their recovery; and the same consequences followed the exposure of infant slaves.<sup>317</sup>

## Roman Reforms after AUC 813<sup>318</sup>

The Petronian law, (passed A. u. c. 813,) prohibited masters from compelling their slaves to fight with wild beasts. Hadrian restrained a proprietor from 'selling his slave to a keeper of gladiators, or to a pander, [leno,] except as a punishment; and then, only with the sanction of the judge. Septimius Severus forbade, in more general terms, the forcible subjection of slaves to prostitution; and Theodosius strengthened that ordinance, by making freedom to the slaves the penalty for its infringement. The mutilation of slaves was forbidden by Domitian," and those work-houses, [ergastula,] which were, in truth, prisons for the confinement of slaves, were suppressed by Hadrian<sup>319</sup>. Till a late era, the ties of affection and of blood, among slaves, were not saved from arbitrary disregard, by any law introduced for the good of the servile classes; so that, when bodily tortures might not be applied, anguish of another kind, more lasting, and. perhaps not less poignant, might be inflicted, without limitation or redress.

**At last, Justinian did most, to encourage improvement of the condition of bondsmen, and to promote the ultimate extinction of slavery.** What he had begun was not followed up, however, by his successors; and servitude, under different forms, remained in Italy, as in the rest of Europe, throughout the middle ages?<sup>320</sup>

<sup>317</sup> *ibid*, p. 85-87.

<sup>318</sup> A.U.C. i.e. *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*. From the foundation of the City of Rome traditionally dated to 753 BC.

<sup>319</sup> Publius Aelius Hadrianus Augustus (b. 76 A.D., d. 138 A.D.), Roman Emperor from 117 to 138 A.D.

<sup>320</sup> William Blair, p. 127.

## BIBLE AUTHENTICATES AND PERPETUATES SLAVERY

As stated earlier, the first written reference to slavery describes the drunkenness of Noah and the alleged shameful treatment from his son Ham. Genesis records that:

When Noah sobered up and learned what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "A curse on Canaan! He will be a slave to his brothers. Give praise to the LORD, the God of Shem! Canaan will be the slave of Shem. May God cause Japheth to increase! May his descendants live with the people of Shem! Canaan will be the slave of Japheth."<sup>321</sup>

The afore-stated curse of Noah has not been taken merely as a prediction for slavery of the Hamites at the hands of the Semites and the Japhethites but a Divine verdict affirming legitimacy or approval of the institution of slavery. Instead of a blessing, it was the curse that made it lawful for one brother and his descendants to enslave his own brother along with his progeny. Taking true the story, we are led to believe that even from the times of Noah, the concept of the equality of human rights and parity among the brethren had been obliterated by the Almighty himself. Slavery since then stood sanctified as a divinely approved institution. The Christians as well as the Jews, therefore, took slavery as fulfillment of the divine verdict and the holders of slaves were counted among the blessed ones of God.

Eleizer, the slave of Abraham was perhaps the earliest slave mentioned by name in the Bible.<sup>322</sup> Gen 12:16 reports that the King of Egypt had gifted slaves to Abraham. Abraham already had many slaves with him when king Abimelech also enriched him with many gifts including the slaves. The next important reference to

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<sup>321</sup> Gen 9:24-27 GNB.

<sup>322</sup> Gen: 15:4.

slavery pertains to Hagar as a slave girl of Sarah.<sup>323</sup> According to Genesis, Sarah had given her to Abraham in the hope that she may have a child from her. Subsequently, when Sarah complained to Abraham about haughtiness of Hagar, he answered to her that:

"Very well, she is your slave and under your control; do whatever you want with her." Then Sarai treated Hagar so cruelly that she ran away.<sup>324</sup>

The Old Testament as such, granted full liberty to the masters to treat with their slaves in whatever manner they pleased. It was out of question for the slaves to claim any rights against their masters. The story of Hagar affirms the same:

The angel of the LORD met Hagar at a spring in the desert on the road to Shur and said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" She answered, "I am running away from my mistress." He said, "Go back to her and be her slave."<sup>325</sup>

The verses quoted above contain abundant teachings of the Bible about the fate of the slaves. The angel of the LORD or the LORD himself addresses Hagar as '*slave of Sarai*'. As such, when the Lord confers slavery on anyone among His creatures, who could decry the institution of slavery? God did not reprove slavery nor reproach Sarai for cruelty towards her slave. Instead of relieving the distress of Hagar, God bids her to "Go back to her (Sarah) and be her slave."<sup>326</sup> God rather commanded Hagar to submit herself unreservedly to Sarah's persecution. According to Bible, therefore, **God was the authority to sanction and to uphold perpetuation of slavery.** The said sanction and God's commandment to a slave to endure all types of atrocities of the masters had been fully exploited by the Jews as well as the Christians. The latter stood at the back of the slave trade and slave-holders as planters and industrialists throughout the world during the period 1600-1900 AD.

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<sup>323</sup> Gen 16:2. The fakery of the story had been fully exposed by us in our book '*Hagar the Princess*'.

<sup>324</sup> Gen 16:6 GNB.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 16:7-9.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, 16:9.

About 70 years after the death of Abraham, we find Rebecca the wife of Isaac in league with her younger son Jacob, conspiring to hoodwink the old blinded and bedridden Isaac against Esau, the elder brother of Jacob. Through fraudulent misrepresentation before Isaac, Jacob wins the blessings which Isaac intended to confer on Esau. On learning about cheating of Jacob, Isaac does not reprove him nor withdraw his misplaced blessings from him. After providing the dish demanded by Isaac, Esau was begging for the blessings promised to him. Being firstborn, he happened to be the divinely destined son to receive the same. As per Law of Moses, only the first born belonged to the Lord. Hence, all pretensions through insertion of certain words by the scribes of the Israelites in the OT could not have brought any change in the law of the Lord.

According to the Old Testament, Jacob was the younger son of Isaac due to which the law of the Lord was unfavorable to the Israelites. They, therefore, decided to do themselves what the Lord had not done for them. Consequently, a curse was invented to fall on Esau and through contrivance of Rebecca and Jacob, the Israelites claimed to deprive Esau from the blessings of the Almighty. The matter did not stop there. To disqualify, the firstborn, they declared Cain as the eldest son of Adam. He became the first victim of the divine curse. Ishmael was the next first born of Abraham to be accursed and labeled as an outcast sent away from the family and the nativity. Esau comes next as the elder son to be deprived of his father's blessings. Similarly, Reuben the first born of Jacob was condemned for incest with his step mother and Judah, the fourth son of Jacob was bestowed with the blessings rightfully deserved by Reuben.<sup>327</sup> Again Perez the reportedly second born of Judah prevailed over Zerah his twin brother to be the ancestor of all the kings and many prophets of the Israelites including Jesus himself. Among the two sons of Joseph, Jacob blessed Ephraim the younger one

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<sup>327</sup> Gen 35:22-23

ignoring Manasseh the firstborn of Joseph.<sup>328</sup> All these inventions aimed at bypassing the law of the Lord in the actual lives of the Israelites. Commenting on such artifacts of the Israelites, Jonathan Kirsch observed that:

So the story of Judah and Tamar embodies one of the persistent but sometimes overlooked themes of the Bible: **the usurpation of the firstborn son by a younger brother.** Abraham's firstborn son, Ishmael, is cast aside in favor of his younger half brother, Isaac (Gen. 17:15-22); Isaac's second-born son, Jacob, resorts to outright fraud to steal the blessing of the first born from his older brother, Esau (Gen 27:1-30); among Jacob's twelve sons, it is his fourth-born, Judah, who bestowed his name upon the Jewish people and whose line prevailed in the history of Israel. So, too, in Genesis 38, we see that the second-born, Perez, Prevails over his twin brother, not to mention all three of Judah's sons by his Canaanite wife.

We are reminded by all of these stories that **biblical history is not always shaped by the hand of God.** Rather, the destiny of the Israelites is more often served by willful men and women who act on their own initiative and impulse, often in daring and even shocking ways, to make sure that their seed will survive and their descendants will inherit the blessings promised by the Almighty in such ambiguous terms to the Chosen People. And none of the men and women in these stories displays more chutzpah than Tamar herself.

Of course, Tamar can be likened to other women of the Bible who are depicted as sexually adventurous and yet utterly righteous. Like Tamar, Lot's daughters and Ruth the Moabite woman deploy themselves in bed in order to secure children for themselves and survival for their distant descendants. And Tamar is linked in a curious way to another Canaanite woman who acts valiantly to preserve and serve the Israelites and their destiny: Rahab, the original hooker with a heart of gold, whose life is saved by a red thread like the one that figures in the birth of Tamar's children.<sup>329</sup>

Isaac, therefore, had no good reasons to curse Esau without any misdemeanor on his part, yet he has been reported having said:

Isaac answered, "I have already made him master over you, and I have made all his relatives his slaves. (...)<sup>330</sup> You will live

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<sup>328</sup> *ibid* 48:13-14.

<sup>329</sup> Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), 140-141.

<sup>330</sup> Gen 27:37 GNB.

by your sword, But be your brother's slave. (...)<sup>331</sup>

In spite of its insertion in the Old Testament, the so called curse had no effect on the actual lives of Esau and Jacob. It rather had an adverse affect to make Jacob behave like a fugitive or a slave before Esau throughout his life. Jacob had to flee from his home due to fear of Esau. At Paddan Aram Jacob lived in a servile position for 14 years to marry Leah and Rachel the daughters of Laban. He had to serve Laban for another six years to get a share from his sheep. On his return Jacob presented himself before Esau with servile submission (Gen 32:4-5, 7, 13-15, 18, 20, 33:3). Even subsequently, Jacob failed to live an enviable life. Genesis reports that: *And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.*<sup>332</sup> Jacob, therefore, had never seen good days till his death. These were the words uttered by Jacob when Joseph presented him before the Pharaoh.

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.<sup>333</sup>

In contrast to Jacob, Esau and his sons had been the rulers of Edom. Genesis, therefore, counts by name at least 14 dukes among the descendants of Esau.<sup>334</sup> In spite of this, the Israelites took proper care not to mention any prophet among the descendants of Esau.

Except for a short respite during the governorship of Joseph in Egypt, the Israelites had to serve as slaves of the Egyptians for about 450 years. During the said period, they were doomed to miserable slavery, poverty and despair.

So the Egyptians put slave drivers over them to crush their spirits with hard labor. The Israelites built the cities of Pithom

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<sup>331</sup> ibid 27:40.

<sup>332</sup> Gen 37:1 KJV.

<sup>333</sup> ibid 47:9.

<sup>334</sup> Gen 36:15-19.

and Rameses to serve as supply centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more they increased in number and the farther they spread through the land. The Egyptians came to fear the Israelites.<sup>335</sup>

Slavery of the Israelites under the Egyptians had been such an inseparable part of the history of the Israel that it took the shape of an article of their faith. John Drane, therefore, observes that:

At the annual Passover festival, the Jewish child asks about its meaning, and is given the answer:

**'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt,** and the Lord our God brought us forth with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.<sup>336</sup> And if the Holy One, Blessed be He, had not brought our forefathers forth from Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still be slaves in Egypt. So, even though all of us were wise, all of us full of understanding ... we should still be under the commandment to tell the story of the departure from Egypt. And the more one tells the story of departure from Egypt, the more praiseworthy he is.<sup>337</sup>

In spite of repeated reminders in the Old Testament about the lowly past of the Israelites, they never could adopt humility before the Lord or to deal other people with some courtesy. They usually behaved arrogantly even with the Lord God of Israel. They ignore the fact that most of the scriptural accounts from Moses are devoted primarily to their liberation from their bondage in Egypt and God's continued favor in their struggle to conquer the Land of Canaan and to retain it. After the history of Israel and law, **the Old Testament had hardly anything, to teach ethics or humaneness to the Israelites.**

As regards the recorded transaction of sale and purchase of a slave, **Joseph son of Jacob was, perhaps the first person sold as a slave.**<sup>338</sup> **The sellers were the Israelite brothers of Joseph while the purchasers were the Ishmaelites (Midianites) who took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the palace guard in Egypt.**

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<sup>335</sup> Exo 1:11-12 GNB.

<sup>336</sup> Deu 6:21.

<sup>337</sup> John Drane, *An Introduction to the Bible*, (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990), p. 50.

<sup>338</sup> Gen 37:28.

Subsequently, due to a false accusation from the wife of Potiphar, Joseph had to remain imprisoned for about twelve years. Ultimately, on giving a veritable interpretation to the dream of the King, Joseph was released from the prison and appointed as governor general of Egypt. Strange enough that the same Joseph who was sold by his brethren for a meagre amount turned out to be the greatest purchaser of slaves recorded about those times. Here is the detail:

**13.** The famine was so severe that there was no food anywhere, and the people of Egypt and Canaan became weak with hunger. **14.** As they bought grain, Joseph collected all the money and took it to the palace. **15.** When all the money in Egypt and Canaan was spent, the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food! Don't let us die. Do something! Our money is all gone." **16.** Joseph answered, "Bring your livestock; I will give you food in exchange for it if your money is all gone." **17.** So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. That year he supplied them with food in exchange for all their livestock. **18.** The following year they came to him and said, "We will not hide the fact from you, sir, that our money is all gone and our livestock belongs to you. There is nothing left to give you except our bodies and our lands. **19.** Don't let us die. Do something! Don't let our fields be deserted. Buy us and our land in exchange for food. We will be the king's slaves, and he will own our land. Give us grain to keep us alive and seed so that we can plant our fields." **20.** Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for the king. Every Egyptian was forced to sell his land, because the famine was so severe; and all the land became the king's property. **21.** Joseph made slaves of the people from one end of Egypt to the other. **22.** The only land he did not buy was the land that belonged to the priests. They did not have to sell their lands, because the king gave them an allowance to live on.<sup>339</sup>

The slavery originating from the curse of Noah had become a well established institution by the time of Abraham. Subsequently, both Judaism and Christianity took slavery as fulfillment of the word of God. Besides the above, the tradition of Abraham granting free hand to Sarah to treat her slave Hagar in whatever manner she pleased provided the Jews and the Christians the

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<sup>339</sup> Gen 47:13-22 GNB.

scriptural authority to commit all types of brutalities on the slaves. They, therefore, made extensive use of the provision. Slaves, as such, neither had any basic rights nor did they deserve treatment like human beings. Bible not only authorized the owners to hold men and women in bondage but it also perpetuated slavery by authorizing the masters to transmit them to their heirs as their property forever. The master could separate man and wife, parent and child, by denying ingress to his premises. The preference is given of God to enslaving the father rather than freeing the mother and children.<sup>340</sup>

## **The Scriptural Commandments for Enslavement**

Here is the direct commandment of the Lord God allowing the Israelites to enslave the free people around them. God said:

When you go to attack a city, first give its people a chance to surrender. If they open the gates and surrender, they are all to become your slaves and do forced labor for you. But if the people of that city will not surrender, but choose to fight, surround it with your army. Then, when the LORD your God lets you capture the city, kill every man in it. You may, however, take for yourselves the women, the children, the livestock, and everything else in the city. You may use everything that belongs to your enemies. The LORD has given it to you. That is how you are to deal with those cities that are far away from the land you will settle in. "But when you capture cities in the land that the LORD your God is giving you, kill everyone. Completely destroy all the people: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the LORD ordered you to do. Kill them, so that they will not make you sin against the LORD by teaching you to do all the disgusting things that they do in the worship of their gods."<sup>341</sup>

The Israelites, therefore, used to kill all the people in the city with the exception of saving the virgins for their own benefit. Every soul in the captured town or the land had to be put to death. After plundering valuables from the

<sup>340</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, 'Scriptural and Statistical views in Favor of Slavery', (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, VA, 1856) p. 33.

<sup>341</sup> Deu 20:10-18 GNB.

city, they used to put on fire all the houses and everything else. From 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian colonies in the world took due advantage of the same scriptural support to kill hundreds of millions of the Negroes and the Indians through mal-nutrition, overwork, torture, infectious diseases, mass murder and genocide of the indigenous people.

This shows that the nations in the world had no right to defend themselves against the onslaught of the Israelites or the Christians. They could be safe only if they succeeded in repelling or defeating them. Alternately, even if the gentiles and non-Christians agreed to surrender before them, they were doomed to be the slaves. They stood deprived not only of freedom but also of their possessions. The captors or conquerors could extract all types of hard work from them. In the event of winning a battle, they were enjoined to kill every man in the city. They were also permitted to take for themselves, the women, the children, the livestock and everything else useful for them. In stead of Almighty the creator, sustainer and evolver of the entire universe, the Israelites propagated the Lord God as the God of Israelites exclusively. As such, many insertions in the Old Testament depict the God concerned only with the welfare of the Israelites.

The Old Testament had granted general permission to the Israelites to enslave people other than Israelites. The law, however, had imposed certain restrictions about the Israelites enslaved by them. Being mindful of the special rights of the Israelites the God approved certain privileges for them:

- 12.** "If any Israelites, male or female, sell themselves to you as slaves, you are to release them after they have served you for six years. When the seventh year comes, you must let them go free. **13.** When you set them free, do not send them away empty-handed. **14.** Give to them generously from what the LORD has blessed you with---sheep, grain, and wine. **15.** Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God set you free; that is why I am now giving you this

command.<sup>342</sup>

In spite of all this, even a Hebrew slave being manumitted after the fixed term of six years was forbidden to take his wife and children with him. The technique, therefore, served well to prevent freedom of the slave.

**1.** "Give the Israelites the following laws: **2.** If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve you for six years. In the seventh year he is to be set free without having to pay anything. **3.** If he was unmarried when he became your slave, he is not to take a wife with him when he leaves; but if he was married when he became your slave, he may take his wife with him. **4.** If his master gave him a wife and she bore him sons or daughters, the woman and her children belong to the master, and the man is to leave by himself.<sup>343</sup>

The injunction that the slave could not take his wife and children with him unless he already possessed them before he was enslaved seems to be a mockery of law. How could the children or wife of slave be free persons. He had no right to possess them. Alternately, if the master had given him a wife, he should have been magnanimous enough to release the entire family instead of keeping them hanged between freedom and slavery. While opposing the abolitionist, Mr. Stringfellow argues that:

Here is the authority, from God himself, to hold men and women, and their increase, in slavery, and to transmit them as property forever; here is plenary power to govern them, whatever measure of severity it may require; provided only, that to govern, be the object in exercising it. Here is power given to the master, to separate man and wife, parent and child, by denying ingress to his premises, sooner than compel him to free or sell the mother, that the marriage relation might be honored. The preference is given of God to enslaving the father rather than freeing the mother and children.<sup>344</sup>

Under every view we are allowed to take of the subject, the conviction is forced upon the mind, that from Abraham's day, until the coming of Christ, (a period of two thousand years,) this institution found favor with God)<sup>345</sup>

<sup>342</sup> Deu 15:12-15 GNB.

<sup>343</sup> Exo 21:1-4 GNB.

<sup>344</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 33.

<sup>345</sup> ibid, p. 33.

As compared to the law in the Old Testament, the overall impact of Islamic injunctions favors the freedom of the entire family than binding a part and freeing the other. Even if a slave was owned by two different persons, the freedom granted by one would make it compulsory for the other owner or the Muslim society to arrange for the release the half-manumitted slave. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) of Islam enjoined that:

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: The Prophet said, "Whoever manumits his share of a jointly possessed slave, it is imperative on him to manumit the slave completely if he has sufficient money to pay the rest of its price which is to be estimated justly. He should pay his partners their shares and release him (the freed one).<sup>346</sup>

Perhaps the most stringent part of the Jewish law is the cruel treatment with a loving slave.

**5.** But if the slave declares that he loves his master, his wife, and his children and does not want to be set free, **6.** Then his master shall take him to the place of worship. There he is to make him stand against the door or the doorpost and put a hole through his ear. Then he will be his slave for life.<sup>347</sup>

The Deuteronomy also contains similar instructions:

**16.** "But your slave may not want to leave; he may love you and your family and be content to stay. **17.** Then take him to the door of your house and there pierce his ear; he will then be your slave for life. Treat your female slave in the same way.<sup>348</sup>

As such, the reward of love is the humiliation through disfigurement and social degradation of the loving slave forever. Islam despises such a cruel treatment with the devout slaves. In contrast to such callous treatment, we find the enlightening tradition of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) in the following:

Zaid bin Haritha had been abducted as a child and after changing many hands of the masters, he had been gifted to the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Subsequently,

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<sup>346</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 44, Hadith Number 68.

<sup>347</sup> Exo 21:5-6 GNB.

<sup>348</sup> Deu 15:16-17 GNB.

learning about his presence at Mekkah, the uncle and father of Zaid tried to negotiate his manumission with the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) agreed to release Zaid without any ransom provided he himself chose freedom over his slavery. Zaid had developed such a love for the Holy Prophet (pbAh) that instead of liberty, he preferred to serve Muhammad the Messenger of the Lord. In acknowledgment of his love and devotion, therefore, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) rewarded Zaid with freedom and by adopting him as his son. Subsequently, the Prophet (pbAh) married Zaid to Zainab bint Jahsh, a noble beauty of Quraish and also the first cousin of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Besides a reward for Zaid's devotion, his marriage with Zainab also aimed at reformation of the Arabian tradition that a slave could not marry a woman of noble birth. Free people in Arabia despised marrying their sisters or daughters etc. with the slaves or the ex-slaves. The marriage between Zaid and Zainab under the directions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh), therefore, removed all class distinctions on the race or clan basis. Believers, thereafter, had no objections on such marriages.

Cruelty towards slaves was permitted up to such an extent that according to the Old Testament '*a master will not be punished if a tortured slave lives for a day or two*' (Exo 21:20). Even in case of a severe chastisement of a slave with a rod that takes his life, the master could neither be punished with death nor scourging or confinement.

There had been no question of despising slavery or those who enslaved the free people. This was the reason that almost all the priests and pontiffs in the western world had been defending the institution of slavery as a divinely sanctioned institution for the human beings. Even up to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, many priests and scholars in Europe and America used to defend enslavement on the basis of its authentication by the Bible. Referring to curse of Noah on Ham, it was argued that:

May it not be said in truth that God decreed this institution before it existed; and has he not connected its existence with

prophetic tokens of special favour to those who should be slaves owners or masters.<sup>349</sup>

Such writers, therefore, tried to present slave-holders as objects of great favour of God including Pharaoh himself. They commended Job and Joseph on the same ground.

Job, who is held up by God himself as a model of human perfection, was a great slaveholder.<sup>350</sup>

Job himself was a great slave-holder, and, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, won no small portion of his claims to character with God and men from the manner in which he discharged his duty to his slaves. Once more: the conduct of Joseph in Egypt, as Pharaoh's counsellor, under all the circumstances, proves him a friend to absolute slavery, as a form of government better adapted to the state of the world at that time.<sup>351</sup>

Referring to massive enslavement of free people by Joseph, the writer remarks that:

How far the hand of God was in this overthrow of liberty, I will not decide; but from the fact that he has singled out the greatest slaveholders of that age, as the objects of his special favor, it would seem that the institution was one furnishing great opportunities to exercise grace and glorify God, as it still does, where its duties are faithfully discharged.<sup>352</sup>

It is, therefore, futile to search for any reproof against slavery in the Bible from Adam to Moses and from Jesus to the Christian fathers till today. Evidently, the Lord God of the universe stood besides the masters and had no concern with the inhuman treatment of the slaves. No wonder that both the Israelites as well as the Christians never had any sympathies with the slaves.

The Lord had such strong affiliation with the Israelites that abandoning all other human beings and all the universe, he chose to live among the Israelites in the desert. In return, the Israelites expelled all other nations from the domain of the Lord God of Israel. They ascribed

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<sup>349</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 9.

<sup>350</sup> *ibid*, p. 24.

<sup>351</sup> *ibid*, p. 22.

<sup>352</sup> *ibid*, p. 23.

different Gods to other nations but all such Gods were inferior Gods as compared to the Lord God of Israel. Besides destroying the monotheism of the Decalogue, the self-service and possessiveness of the Israelites opened the highway towards acceptance of the multiplicity of the deities. Later on many factions of the Israelites started worshiping such Gods by joining in the rituals of pagans or other nations around them.

## **Daughters Sold as Slaves**

The Law of Moses had it that:

**7.** "If a man sells his daughter as a slave, she is not to be set free, as male slaves are. **8.** If she is sold to someone who intends to make her his wife, but he doesn't like her, then she is to be sold back to her father; her master cannot sell her to foreigners, because he has treated her unfairly. **9.** If a man buys a female slave to give to his son, he is to treat her like a daughter. **10.** If a man takes a second wife, he must continue to give his first wife the same amount of food and clothing and the same rights that she had before. **11.** If he does not fulfill these duties to her, he must set her free and not receive any payment.<sup>353</sup>

The verse 8 quoted above enjoined that the daughter of a poor man sold as slave and later on disliked by her husband can only be resold to her father. The Law, however, does not disclose what to do if father of such woman had died or had no resources to buy her back. As against this, Islam forbids sale or purchase of any free person what to say of one's own children. Such needy persons are the liability of the Muslim Ummah as a whole. The state also must provide for them. The rich people are obliged to arrange for their manumission and help the poor and the destitute to relieve them from the miseries.

Besides the Exodus, even the Leviticus contains detailed law about slavery as quoted below:

<sup>353</sup> Exo 21:7-11 GNB.

**39.** If any Israelites living near you become so poor that they sell themselves to you as a slave, you shall not make them do the work of a slave. **40.** They shall stay with you as hired workers and serve you until the next Year of Restoration. **41.** At that time they and their children shall leave you and return to their family and to the property of their ancestors. **42.** The people of Israel are the LORD's slaves, and he brought them out of Egypt; they must not be sold into slavery. **43.** Do not treat them harshly, but obey your God.<sup>354</sup>

The passage quoted above specifies only the Israelites as the slaves of the Lord. What about the other people in the world? Are they absolutely free people or slaves of other inferior gods? Nothing has been said explicitly.

Another suggestion for acquiring slaves is found in the following. Only the Israelites are untouchable here.

**44.** If you need slaves, you may buy them from the nations around you. **45.** You may also buy the children of the foreigners who are living among you. Such children born in your land may become your property, **46.** and you may leave them as an inheritance to your children, whom they must serve as long as they live. **But you must not treat any Israelites harshly.** **47.** Suppose a foreigner living with you becomes rich, while some Israelites become poor and sell themselves as slaves to that foreigner or to a member of that foreigner's family. **48.** After they are sold, they still have the right to be bought back. A brother. **49.** or an uncle or a cousin or another close relative may buy them back; or if they themselves earn enough, they may buy their own freedom. **50.** They must consult the one who bought them, and they must count the years from the time they sold themselves until the next Year of Restoration and must set the price for their release on the basis of the wages paid hired workers. **51.** They must refund a part of the purchase price according to the number of years left, **52.** (SEE 25:51) **53.** as if they had been hired on an annual basis. Their master must not treat them harshly. **54.** If they are not set free in any of these ways, they and their children must be set free in the next Year of Restoration. **55.** Israelites cannot be permanent slaves, because the people of Israel are the LORD's slaves. He brought them out of Egypt; he is the LORD their God.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> ibid, 25:39-43.

<sup>355</sup> ibid, 25:44-55.

Since the verses No. 10 and 11 are based on human considerations, therefore, Islam did not abolish the same. As regards verses 7-9, Islam does not allow anyone to sell himself or any of his relatives as a slave.

**The Islamic community is duty bound to help the impoverished person in such a manner that he does not feel compelled to adopt the extreme option of selling himself or his relatives.** Islam has, therefore, strictly prohibited enslaving free people or selling sons, daughters etc. The compulsory system of Zakat and many other injunctions in the Qur'ān, to help the poor are more than enough to relieve the needful from their urgent necessities. The indebted and the destitute are properly looked after in Islam.

In the Deuteronomy we find favorable instructions for the Israelites:

**18.** Do not be resentful when you set slaves free; after all, they have served you for six years at half the cost of hired servants. Do this, and the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.<sup>356</sup>

These instructions showing partiality towards Israelites cannot be ascribed to the Almighty who is the Lord God of all His creatures in the Universe. Tending to self-service of the Israelites, such instructions might have been the handiwork of the Israelites themselves.

The Bible does not despise enslavement of one brother by another. Instead of condemning the institution of slavery, the Bible authenticates it as quoted earlier.<sup>357</sup>

The Israelites, as such, could enslave people from all nations irrespective of their ethnicity or faith. Israelites being the only exception were at liberty to treat slaves cruelly as per tradition of Abraham who conferred unlimited power to Sarah to treat Hagar her slave. He said '*She is your slave and under your control; do*

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<sup>356</sup> Deu 15:18 GNB.

<sup>357</sup> Lev 25:44-46 KJV.

*whatever you want with her*'.<sup>358</sup> The only exception to the rule had been the Israelites:

But you must not treat any Israelites harshly.<sup>359</sup>

In his book 'Scriptural and Statistical views in Favor of Slavery', Thornton Stringfellow writes that:

Again, in Genesis xvii, we are informed of a covenant God entered into with Abraham; in which he stipulates to be a God to him and his seed, (not his servants.) and to give to his seed the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. He expressly stipulates, that Abraham shall put the token of this covenant upon every servant horn in his house, and upon every servant bought with his money of any stranger. — Gen. xvii: 12, 13.<sup>360</sup>

## **God Disowns the Slaves**

God's assurance to be the God of Abraham and his seed, therefore, was tantamount to disowning all other nations and slaves as His worshipers. By claiming themselves to be the only genuine seed of Abraham, the Israelites established their sole proprietary rights on God denying all other people in the world to share the God with the Israelites. As such, the other nations and the slaves stood disowned by the Almighty. Being rejected by the Lord God of Israel, they were left in the lurch to find other gods or to live without any God. Bible also had no provision for manumission of other nations. Death alone could free them from the yoke of their masters.

As regards the commandments pertaining to the slaves in the Old Testament, the same depict not only the partiality of God towards the Israelites but also enjoin extremely cruel treatment towards the non-Israelites. We, therefore, feel that such favoritism towards the Israelites and God turning His back towards all other

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<sup>358</sup> Gen 16:6 GNB.

<sup>359</sup> Lev 25:46 KJV.

<sup>360</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 15-16.

nations cannot be accepted as a faithfully reported word of God. It is more likely that all such injunctions were the products of the scribes and priests of Israel.

The Old Testament had been stressing primarily on worship and obedience to one and the only Lord God of the universe. Monotheism and worship of the almighty wholeheartedly was the crux of the teachings of Moses. Sin was taken as a routine matter and besides admonition to refrain from sinning all the prophets of Israel had been stressing on repentance and doing good to achieve salvation from the God their savior.

## **Greek Philosophers**

Most of the Greek philosophers can be taken as proponents of slavery. Homer (c. 850 BC) believed that even if persons weren't inferior before they became slaves, enslaving them changed them in such a way to make them natural slaves. Plato (428-348 BC) was of the opinion that it was right for the better to rule over the inferior. He says "*Justice consists in the superior ruling over and having more than the inferior*". Aristotle, held that: "*For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule... And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life* (Aristotle, *Politics*).<sup>361</sup> Aristotle the Great philosopher states that barbarians are slaves by nature. (*Politics* 1.2-7; 3.14).

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<sup>361</sup> BBC (archives), Ethics Guide, *Philosophers Justifying Slavery*, 2014.

## Moral Excellence had no Value Among the Israelites

The Israelites as well as the early Christian fathers left no stones unturned to prove slavery as a divinely ordained institution among the human beings. The traditions and practice of the prophets i.e. Moses, Joshua and other prophets of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament suffice to prove that **slavery had been a divinely sanctioned institution in Judaism as well as in Christianity.** They have, therefore, been commanding slavery as the revealed will of God. They hold that God decreed slavery as a special token of favor to those who happened to be masters or the owners of slaves. To possess slaves was a blessing of the LORD and all slave holders including Pharaoh, were objects of great favor of God. In addition to the above, the Christian priests used to propagate usefulness of slavery for acceleration of production, wealth and leisure of the masters. Opulence had always been the ideal or goal of the Jews as well as the Christians from the time of Abraham till today. The OT had stressed the same:

And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.<sup>362</sup>

And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.<sup>363</sup>

And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.<sup>364</sup>

And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Gen, 13:2 KJV.

<sup>363</sup> ibid, 20:14.

<sup>364</sup> ibid, 26:13-14.

<sup>365</sup> ibid, 24:35.

Greatness of a man, therefore, depended entirely on his affluence and power. Moral excellence and Godliness did not count for nobility of a man. As such, slavery had been taken as a blessing for the masters and a doomed fate for the slaves.

## SLAVERY AND THE CHRISTIANITY

We had made a short reference to Kingdom of God in the first chapter of the book. We also discussed the concept of repentance there. Repentance in the real sense is remorsefulness over the wrongs done by us. Besides feeling guilty and ashamed of our transgressions, the **repentance essentially contains firm resolve not to repeat the sinful acts.** There can be no repentance without firm commitment to refrain from violating the commandments of the Almighty. In all matters where it is possible to recompense the victim, the same must be done finding the first opportunity for the same. Where it is impossible to undo the wrong done, we must sincerely seek forgiveness from the Almighty.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had been sent towards the Israelites as final warners from the Lord. Most of the Israelites and especially the high priests and the politically powerful classes among the Jews refused to receive these prophets properly. They were, therefore, doomed to destruction or elimination as is evident from their chastisements during 65 to 70 AD and 130 to 135 AD.

Besides exhorting the people to obey all the commandments of the Lord and worshiping Him wholeheartedly, Jesus had given admirable instructions about tolerance, generosity, contentment, moral excellence, good treatment with neighbors and other human beings etc. He strongly disapproved oppression, greed and materialism. In spite of this, we find no stress on abolition of slavery from him. Being silent about cruel treatment of the masters with the slaves or their servants, he did not utter a single word about manumission of slaves or compassionate treatment with

them. The Gospels rather depict him preaching his followers and especially, the slaves to adopt passivity and femininity against oppression of the Roman authorities or the human masters. In this respect, we have reasons to believe that the Gospels have failed to transmit the true words of Jesus Christ. Instead of a revolutionist, therefore, the evangelists depicted Jesus as a docile preacher and idealist who stressed on passivity and wholehearted obedience to the Roman authorities.

While Jesus Christ had continued to follow Moses and other prophets of Israel to emphasize repentance and doing good deeds for salvation, St. Paul took sharp diversion from the mainstream faith of all the prophets including Jesus himself. He strived to replace the 1500 years old firm faith of the Israelites in one and the only God as per the Decalogue with the **trinity formed by God the father, God the Son and the Holy Ghost**. Yahweh had been the only God and the king of Israel since the time of Moses and the Israelites were obliged to obey no other law than the commandments of Yahweh. Obedience and seeking forgiveness from him had been the only way towards salvation. Setting aside the 10 Commandments of Yahweh, St. Paul attached prime importance to sinfulness of entire mankind and utter inability of their salvation without atonement through blood sacrifice of an unblemished lamb which could be no one except Jesus Christ the first born and the only son of God. Jesus Christ had taken on him all the sins of humankind and atoned the same by his sacrifice i.e. crucifixion at the hands of the Romans. Believing in the Jesus Christ as God son of God and ultimate savior of the humankind was, therefore, the only way to salvation.

Although the Israelites did not take the matter of sin too far yet the Christians especially during the colonization period came up with new arguments to justify their enslavement of the black Africans. They emphatically asserted that the curse of Noah on Ham had doomed the black Africans to slavery before the Japhethites and the Semites (Gen 9:24-27). The table of nations in Gen 10

asserts that one of the descendants of Ham was Kush and the Kushites as his descendants were the people associated with the Nile region of North Africa. From this, it had been concluded that the Africans as a whole were the descendants of Ham. **Their slavery before the Westerners and/or the Semites could be nothing except fulfillment of the Divine Writ as per curse of Noah.** Since the Western Nations including the Americans assert their descent from Japheth, they claim to be divinely approved masters of the Negro descendants of Ham and Canaan. As such, they claim full justification to enslave the Africans and to subject them to as cruel treatment as they deem fit.

## **Christianity Based on Letters of St. Paul**

St. Paul a Roman citizen and a Jew happened to be the earliest person writing letters about the faith of Jesus. The earliest Gospel ascribed to St. Mark was written at least 20 years after the letters of Paul. Other Gospels pertain to much later periods. Letters of Paul, therefore, form the basis of the Gospels extant today. Paul had neither seen nor heard Jesus Christ during his missionary period on earth. He also did not learn about the life, the works and preachings of Jesus from any of the companions or apostles chosen by Jesus himself. For many years after the death of Jesus, Paul had been persecuting the followers of Jesus. According to him, several years after the death of Jesus Christ, he was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus when according to him, he had a vision of the Christ. The said vision formed the basis of St. Paul's preaching about faith. He, however, claimed superiority over all genuine apostles of Jesus on the ground **that he had received his Gospel directly from the Christ in spirit than the inferior Christ of flesh and blood who lived as a man among other men and died as a man in the Holy Land.** Even so, the Gospel revealed to Paul remains a mystery because no one had ever seen it nor did St. Paul quote a single sentence from the same. As regards the vision, St. Paul failed to name his companions on

way to Damascus nor could he produce any other witness to endorse his claim.

As regards the true followers and disciples of Jesus Christ, there is no evidence that he had either dictated his words or revelations to them. No one had kept a record of his preachings. The faith of Jesus in the New Testament, therefore, is based primarily on the 14 letters of St. Paul than any authentic words of Jesus Christ. Its pity that even the letters ascribed to St. Peter and others cannot be taken as the genuine writings of the authors mentioned in the New Testament. It is more probable that all such letters might have originated from a school patronized by the Roman authorities to promote the theology of St. Paul with the purpose of assimilation of Jews into a new faith attaching prime importance to Jesus as the God Incarnate teaching his followers to surrender themselves before the will of the Romans and their masters. The old Lord God of the Universe and His law had to be abandoned in favor of the trinity emerging from the letters of St. Paul.

Although Mathew reports extreme mercy against the sin of one's brother or about repayment of debt (Mat 18:22-35) but in Mat 24:45, we find the **suggestion of cutting in pieces of the wrong doing slave by his master**. The slave in the absence of his master had started beating other servants both men and women besides eating and drinking excessively. In the parable, therefore, Jesus is reported having said:

**46.** (...) The master will cut him in pieces and make him share the fate of the disobedient. **47.** "The servant who knows what his master wants him to do, but does not get himself ready and do it, will be punished with a heavy whipping. **48.** But the servant who does not know what his master wants, and yet does something for which he deserves a whipping, will be punished with a light whipping.<sup>366</sup>

We have reasons to believe that Jesus might not have suggested such severe action against the servants or the slaves. No religion before or after Moses contained such drastic action against a slave. Islam did not allow capital

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<sup>366</sup> Luk 12:46-48 GNB.

punishment or flogging of a slave unless and until he was convicted of a crime and punished by the Islamic court under the law making no discrimination between a slave and a master. As regards the masters, they were even forbidden to slap the servant to punish him.

## Peter on Slavery

Besides the preachings ascribed to Jesus Christ the main support of slavery is based on the letters of St. Peter and Paul. Peter is reported having written:

**11.** I appeal to you, my friends, as strangers and refugees in this world! Do not give in to bodily passions, which are always at war against the soul. **12.** Your conduct among the heathen should be so good that when they accuse you of being evildoers, they will have to recognize your good deeds and so praise God on the Day of his coming. **13. For the sake of the Lord submit yourselves to every human authority: to the Emperor, who is the supreme authority, 14. and to the governors, who have been appointed by him to punish the evildoers and to praise those who do good.** **15.** For God wants you to silence the ignorant talk of foolish people by the good things you do. **16.** Live as free people; do not, however, use your freedom to cover up any evil, but live as God's slaves. **17.** Respect everyone, love other believers, honor God, and respect the Emperor. **18.** You servants must submit yourselves to your masters and show them complete respect, not only to those who are kind and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. **19. God will bless you for this, if you endure the pain of undeserved suffering because you are conscious of his will.** **20.** For what credit is there if you endure the beatings you deserve for having done wrong? But if you endure suffering even when you have done right, God will bless you for it. **21.** It was to this that God called you, for Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps. **22.** He committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. **23.** When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the righteous Judge. **24. Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.** It is by his wounds that you have been healed. **25.** You were like sheep that had lost their way, but now you have been brought back

to follow the Shepherd and Keeper of your souls.<sup>367</sup>

To teach passivity and other-worldliness to the followers of Jesus, St. Paul preached to abstain from their natural and physical needs. Besides this, tortures had to be inflicted or endured on flesh to elevate the spirit. There had been no formula to suggest harmonious growth of the body and the soul. **Body in fact had to be sacrificed to attain spiritual excellence.** The Christians must, therefore, give up their bodies and their material interests in the world to serve the Roman authorities especially the Roman Emperor to become acceptable to the Almighty.

As such, to divert Christians from obedience and worship of the Almighty and replace the same with obedience of Roman Masters and worship of Jesus Christ, St. Paul and Peter preached merits of subservience to the Romans. Peter said:

My dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering, as though something unusual were happening to you. Rather **be glad that you are sharing Christ's sufferings**, so that you may be full of joy when his glory is revealed. Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; **this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you.** (...) However, if you suffer because you are a Christian, don't be ashamed of it, but thank God that you bear Christ's name. (...) So then, those who suffer because it is God's will for them, should by their good actions trust themselves completely to their Creator, who always keeps his promise.<sup>368</sup>

From the above, it transpires that the primary mission of Jesus Christ was not to call the people towards the wholehearted worship and obedience to the Almighty. **He in fact tried to make them devoted slaves and obedient servants of the civil authorities.** On the other hand, we find no advice from Jesus Christ to the masters to refrain from injustice and cruelty towards the fellow human beings enslaved by them. Instead of disapproving the atrocities and slavery both Peter and Paul insisted on submission to the authorities. **Focus of**

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<sup>367</sup> 1Pe 2:13-25 GNB.

<sup>368</sup> 1Pe 4:12-14, 16 & 19 GNB.

**fidelity, therefore, shifted from the Almighty to the ruling junta of Rome.**

## Teachings of St. Paul

Christian theology and teachings on slavery are based primarily on the letters of St. Paul whose mission was to make all the people in the lands conquered by the Romans accept their slavery as the will of God. He aimed at assimilation of the Jews and the gentiles in the Empire in such a manner that the vanquished people may willingly accept superiority and authority of the Romans to rule over them.

St. Paul's difficulty was that the Jews accepted no one as their King or savior except the Lord, e.g. Psalms had it that:

**6. Sing praise to God; sing praise to our king! 7. God is king over all the world; praise him with songs! 8. God sits on his sacred throne; he rules over the nations. 9. The rulers of the nations assemble with the people of the God of Abraham. More powerful than all armies is he; he rules supreme.<sup>369</sup>**

But you have been our king from the beginning, O God; you have saved us many times.<sup>370</sup>

As such, the supreme power and savior deserving worship and wholehearted obedience from the Jews was the God. Jews, therefore, accepted no authority or lawgiver except Him. They held that:

**For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.<sup>371</sup>**

Similarly, there are numerous verses in the Old Testament to affirm that only the Almighty was the savior of human kind e.g. Ps 55:16, 59:1, 62:5-6, 68:19-20, 70:5 etc.

To divert people from subservience to Yahweh and His law towards wholehearted obedience to the Romans and

<sup>369</sup> Psa 47:6-9 GNB.

<sup>370</sup> ibid, 74:12.

<sup>371</sup> Isa 33:22 KJV.

their law, St. Paul perhaps also had in his mind the words of Jesus Christ that:

"You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.<sup>372</sup>

It was, therefore, the first priority for St. Paul to relieve Jews from their obligations under Law of Moses and their wholehearted devotion to the Almighty as the only king of the universe. Only thus could they accept the Romans as their exclusive masters and kings instead of the Lord God. Paul, therefore, preached ineffectiveness of the works under law for salvation. To nullify the Law of Moses, he did not quote any new revelations from the Almighty nor could he produce words from Jesus Christ. He used his own authority to abrogate the Law of Moses and to suggest new gods. He said:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.<sup>373</sup>

**10.** For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. **11.** But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. **12.** And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.<sup>374</sup>

**24.** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25.** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. **26.** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>375</sup>

Law was introduced in order to increase wrongdoing; but where sin increased, God's grace increased much more.<sup>376</sup>

As such, it was futile to worship or to obey the law of the old God of the Old Testament. Faith in Jesus confessing him the Lord and the ultimate savior was enough for the salvation of his followers. By such teachings, St. Paul

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<sup>372</sup> Mat 6:24 GNB.

<sup>373</sup> Gal 2:16 KJV.

<sup>374</sup> ibid, 3:10-12.

<sup>375</sup> ibid, 3:24-26.

<sup>376</sup> Rom 5:20 GNB.

nullified all the teachings of the Prophets up to Jesus Christ. It was, therefore, useless to follow the law or to obey the commandments of the Almighty for salvation. He again imposed his own opinion to supersede the law of the Almighty:

**20.** For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned. (...) **28.** For we conclude that a person is put right with God only through faith, and not by doing what the Law commands.<sup>377</sup>

St. Paul arrogantly contradicted the word of Jesus Christ who said:

**17.** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. **18.** For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.<sup>378</sup>

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.<sup>379</sup>

As such, withdrawing the Jews and the gentiles from the obedience to the Almighty, St. Paul preached them to obey their human masters wholeheartedly on the grounds that the God had appointed the civil authorities. Disobedience to them was an evil act on the part of slaves. He said:

Those who are slaves must consider their masters worthy of all respect, so that no one will speak evil of the name of God and of our teaching.<sup>380</sup>

Mr. Thornton Stringfellow, therefore, observes that:

Jesus Christ causes his will to be published to the world; and it is this, that if a Christian slave have an unbelieving master, who acknowledges no allegiance to Christ, this believing slave must count his master worthy of all honor, according to what the Apostle teaches the Romans, "Bender, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." —

<sup>377</sup> ibid, 3:20-28.

<sup>378</sup> Mat 5:17-18 KJV.

<sup>379</sup> Luk 16:17 KJV.

<sup>380</sup> 1Ti 6:1 GNB.

Rom. xiii: 7. Now, honor is enjoined of God in the Scriptures, from children to parents — from husbands to wives — from subjects to magistrates and rulers, and here by Jesus Christ, from Christian slaves to unbelieving masters, who held them as property by law, with power over their very lives. And the command is remarkable.<sup>381</sup>

The institution of slavery continued to exist in the same condition even after the Christianization of the West. It was so because according to the New Testament, Jesus Christ, St. Peter and Paul did not condemn slavery. By advising their followers to submit to their worldly masters, they made slavery as an article of faith for the Christians. According to Paul, a servant or a slave was required to serve his master as Christ (pbAh). He, therefore, preached that:

*<sup>5</sup>Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ.* <sup>6</sup>Do this not only when they are watching you, because you want to gain their approval; but with all your heart **do what God wants, as slaves of Christ.** <sup>7</sup>Do your work as slaves cheerfully, **as though you served the Lord,** and not merely human beings. <sup>8</sup>Remember that the Lord will reward each of us, whether slave or free, for the good work we do.<sup>382</sup>

St. Paul was more emphatic to preach subservience to the civil authorities than Peter. It was perhaps for the first time in the human history that some prominent theologian assigned priority to the human masters and state authorities over duties of the believers towards the Almighty. Henceforth it was commendable for the slaves to suffer at the hands of cruel masters. Wholehearted obedience even to the pagan masters became a prerequisite for God's blessings and salvation.

#### ▪ **Duties Towards the State Authorities**

St. Paul had been more explicit on the servitude before the Roman authorities than his other preachings:

**1.** Everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission, and the existing authorities have been put there by God. **2. Whoever opposes the existing authority opposes what God has ordered;** and

<sup>381</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 46-47.

<sup>382</sup> The Bible, Eph 6:5-8 GNB.

anyone who does so will bring judgment on himself. **3.** For rulers are not to be feared by those who do good, but by those who do evil. Would you like to be unafraid of those in authority? Then do what is good, and they will praise you, **4.** because they are God's servants working for your own good. But if you do evil, then be afraid of them, because their power to punish is real. They are God's servants and carry out God's punishment on those who do evil. **5.** For this reason you must obey the authorities---not just because of God's punishment, but also as a matter of conscience. **6.** That is also why you pay taxes, because the authorities are working for God when they fulfill their duties. **7.** Pay, then, what you owe them; pay them your personal and property taxes, and show respect and honor for them all.<sup>383</sup>

These preachings as per verses 1-5 quoted above depict the Roman emperor and their governors as **appointees of the Lord serving like angels to do good and to punish the evil-doers.** Hence, keeping in view conviction of Peter and Paul, the crucifixion of Jesus must also be taken as a rightful punishment to an evil-door.

Referring to Paul's words in Titus, Thornton Stringfellow<sup>384</sup>, argues that:

While they professed "to know God," that is, to know his will under the gospel dispensation, "in works they denied him;" that is, they did, and required others to do, what was contrary to his will under the gospel dispensation. "They were abominable," that is, to the church and state, "and disobedient," that is to the authority of the Apostles, and the civil authority of the land. Titus, he then exhorts, "to speak the things that become sound doctrine;" that is, that the members of the church observe the law of the land, and obey the civil magistrate ; that "servants be obedient to their own masters, and please them well in all things," not "answering

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<sup>383</sup> Rom 13:1-7 GNB.

<sup>384</sup> Thornton Stringfellow (1788-1869) was the pastor of Stevensburg Baptist Church in Culpeper County, Virginia. He is perhaps best known for his **condoning African American slavery on the basis of the scriptures.** Incidentally, we learn that the Stringfellow himself owned East India Stock. (Eric Williams, '*Capitalism and Slavery*' 1946, p. 186). His Article in favor of slavery, therefore, also reflects his personal interests in the institution of slavery. Stringfellow, therefore, left no stone unturned to denounce the abolitionists in his book mentioned above.

again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," in that which subjects the ecclesiastical to the civil authority in particular. These things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates." — Titus i: 16, and ii: from 1 to 10, and iii: 1.<sup>385</sup>

St. Paul stressed obedience to the state authorities as appointees of God. Hence, whosoever was opposing the authorities was opposing the commandment of the Lord which was an evil act warranting damnation and punishment.

Ever-since, the teachings of St. Peter and Paul, the Christendom gave priority to the civil law over the law of God. Even fulfillment of their obligations under the covenant with the Lord had to be ignored. Unlike the Old Testament, the Qur'ān does not enjoin any such priority to obedience of the civil authority setting aside the law of the Lord or teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). God says:

O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination.<sup>386</sup>

It is worth noting here that in Islam, God is the first and the super most authority to be obeyed by the Muslims. He alone is the focus of loyalty and obedience. All other loyalties or dedications are secondary to the obedience to the Lord. Even obedience to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) is subject to the obedience to the Almighty. اولو الامر i.e. the authority or the leader among Muslims, therefore, enjoy tertiary importance in order of obedience. The civil authority among the Muslims does not deserve any obedience in violation of the injunctions of the Lord or Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh).<sup>387</sup> As regards the

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<sup>385</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 45.

<sup>386</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:59 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>387</sup> Obedience even to a Muslim authority is subject to his righteousness and observation of the Divine Law and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). If the ruler swerves from justice and equity or violates the injunctions of the Qur'ān, he has to be

rulers from the pagans or non-believers, Muslims are under no obligation to obey them. They can themselves decide their response to the ruler keeping in view, the pros and cons of their action.

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Holy Prophet said: It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen (to the ruler appointed over him) and obey him whether he likes it or not, except that he is ordered to do a sinful thing. If he is ordered to do a sinful act, a Muslim should neither listen to him nor should he obey his orders.<sup>388</sup>

... (The Holy Prophet (pbAh) said): There is no submission in matters involving God's disobedience or displeasure. Submission is obligatory only in what is good (and reasonable).<sup>389</sup>

Taken for granted the Roman Emperor or civil authorities as the appointees of God the father or Jesus Christ as God son of God, how could they claim absolute sovereignty for themselves? By virtue of their appointment they were duty-bound to obey commandments of the Lord and follow the Christ. How could they claim superiority over the Lord God or Jesus Christ? Such appointees of God had no justification to crucify the son of God with ignominious punishment reserved exclusively for the slave criminals of Rome.

#### ▪ ***Serving Human Masters as LORD Jesus Christ***

With the preachings of St. Peter and Paul, the reverence to human masters came at par with the service and worship of Jesus Christ. This intermingling of the reverence of Jesus and the God with the Roman authorities is unique with the early Christian fathers. While addressing the Colossians, St. Paul said:

**22.** Slaves, obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their

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checked by the Muslim Ummah. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) said: "Verily, among the greatest of struggles is a word of justice in front of a tyrant ruler." (*Sunan At-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2174).

<sup>388</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Book 20, Hadith Number 4533:

<sup>389</sup> *ibid*, Hadith Number 4535:

approval; but do it with a sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord. **23.** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. **24.** Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve. **25.** And all wrongdoers will be repaid for the wrong things they do, because God judges everyone by the same standard.<sup>390</sup>

Note the self attained authority of St. Paul to suggest God and the Human masters as alternates for wholehearted obedience. He interpreted slavery as a gift of God for the slaves and advised them to remain as slaves without aspiring for their freedom. Anyhow, he was lenient enough to allow them to avail freedom when and if they found an opportunity for the same. He says:

**17.** Each of you should go on living according to the Lord's gift to you, and as you were when God called you. This is the rule I teach in all the churches. (...) **20.** Each of you should remain as you were when you accepted God's call. **21.** Were you a slave when God called you? Well, never mind; but if you have a chance to become free, use it. **22.** For a slave who has been called by the Lord is the Lord's free person; in the same way a free person who has been called by Christ is his slave. (...) **24.** My friends, each of you should remain in fellowship with God in the same condition that you were when you were called.<sup>391</sup>

The letters of St. Peter as well as Paul seem to impress upon the believers that God had relinquished His rights and authority in favor of the Romans. Being relieved from previous master i.e. the God, the Jews as well as gentiles were free to serve the Romans. Since Jesus said nothing about injustice and cruelty of the rulers, therefore, his silence about them can be counted as tacit approval of Jesus for perpetuity of cruelty and slavery in the world. Mr. Stringfellow, therefore, observed that:

Here, by the Roman law, slaves were property, — yet Paul ordains, in this and all other churches, that Christianity gave them no title to freedom, but on the contrary, required them not to care for being slaves, or in other words, to be contented with their state, or relation, unless they could be made free, in a lawful way.<sup>392</sup>

<sup>390</sup> Col 3:22-25 GNB.

<sup>391</sup> 1Co 7:17, 20-21, 24.

<sup>392</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 40.

Referring to the conquest of Babylonians, Median Persians and Macedonian Empires by the Romans, Mr. Stringfellow said:

These revolutionary scenes of violence left one half the human race (within the range of their influence,) in abject bondage to the other half. This was the state of things in these provinces addressed by Peter, when he wrote.<sup>393</sup>

Arguing in favor of slavery Mr. Stringfellow asserts that:

The Saviour appeared in an age of learning — the enslaved condition of half the Roman Empire, at the time, is a fact embodied with all the historical records — the constitution God gave the Jews, was in harmony with the Roman regulations on the subject of slavery. In this state of things, Jesus ordered his gospel to be preached in all the world, and to every creature. It was done as he directed; and masters and servants, and persons in all conditions, were brought by the gospel to obey the Saviour.<sup>394</sup>

- ***Slavery the consequence of Sin***

St. Augustine (354-430 AD) thought that slavery was inevitable – **it was the consequence of sin and the fall of man.** Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) also agreed with Augustine and thought that the universe did have a natural structure that gave some men authority over others. He justified this by pointing out the hierarchical nature of heaven where some angels were superior to others.

## **Papal Bull for Slavery**

It is evident from the preceding discussions that the Christians always took slavery as a legitimate institution. A papal bull of 1455 had authorized Portugal to reduce to servitude all infidel peoples. Subsequently, it was in 1492 that Columbus representing Spanish monarchy discovered the New World. Till then the universal claims of the Papacy were unchallenged by individuals and the government. After carefully sifting the rival claims, the pope issued in 1493 a series of papal bulls a line of

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<sup>393</sup> ibid, p. 40.

<sup>394</sup> ibid, p. 53.

demarcation between the colonial possessions of two states: the East went to Portugal and the West to Spain.<sup>395</sup>

All rival countries and especially France, Britain and Denmark did not agree to such a partition.

Francis I of France<sup>396</sup> voiced his celebrated protest: "**The sun shines for me as for others.** I should very much like to see the clause in Adam's will that excludes me from a share of the world."<sup>397</sup>

Hence this voice was not raised against slavery. It was rather against the special privileges granted to Portugal and Spain. France, Britain and Denmark were agitating their exclusion from the so-called gift of God. Sir William Cecil, the famous Elizabethian Statesman, therefore, denied the Pope's right "to give and take" kingdoms to whomsoever he pleased.

## **Emancipation Prohibited**

Gibbon, in his *Rome*, vol. 1, pages 25, 26, 27, shows, from standard authorities, that Rome at this time swayed its sceptre over one hundred and twenty millions of souls; that in every province, and in every family, absolute slavery existed; that it was at least fifty years later than the date of Peter's letters, before the absolute power of life and death over the slave was taken from the master, and committed to the magistrate; that about sixty millions of souls were held as property in this abject condition; that the price of a slave was four times that of an ox; that their punishments were very sanguinary; that in the second century, when their condition began to improve a little, **emancipation was prohibited**, except for great personal merit, or some public service rendered to the State; and that it was not until the third or fourth generation after freedom was obtained, that the descendants of a slave could share in the honors of the State. **This is the state, condition, or relation among the members of the apostolic churches, whether among Gentiles or Jews; which the Holy Ghost, by Paul for the Gentiles, and Peter for the Jews, recognizes as lawful;**

<sup>395</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946) p. 3.

<sup>396</sup> Francis I (1494 –1547) was the first King of France from the Angoulême branch of the House of Valois, reigning from 1515 until his death.

<sup>397</sup> Eric Williams, p. 3.

the mutual duties of which he prescribes in the language above. Now, **I ask, can any man in his proper senses, from these premises, bring himself to conclude that slavery is abolished by Jesus Christ**, or that obligations are imposed by him upon his disciples that are subversive of the institution? Knowing as we do from cotemporary historians, that the institution of slavery existed at the time and to the extent stated by Gibbon — what sort of a soul a man must have, who, with these facts before him, will conceal the truth on this subject, and hold Jesus Christ responsible for a scheme of treason that would, if carried out, have brought the life of every human being on earth at the time, into the most imminent peril, and that must have worked the destruction of half the human race?<sup>398</sup>

## Necessity or Economy of Slavery

The necessity of slavery has been critically appraised in the following:

"Odious resource" though it might be, as Merivale called it, slavery was an economic institution of the first importance. It had been the basis of Greek economy and had built up the Roman Empire. In modern times it provided the sugar for the tea and the coffee cups of the Western world. It produced the cotton to serve as a base for modern capitalism. It made the American South and the Caribbean islands. Seen in historical perspective, it forms a part of that general picture of the harsh treatment of the underprivileged classes, the unsympathetic poor laws and severe feudal laws, and the indifference with which the rising capitalist class was "beginning to reckon prosperity in terms of pounds sterling, and . . . becoming used to the idea of sacrificing human life to the deity of increased production."<sup>399</sup>

The reasons for slavery, wrote Gibbon Wakefield,<sup>400</sup> "are not moral, but economical circumstances; they relate not to vice and virtue, but to production." With the limited population of Europe in the sixteenth century, the free laborers necessary to cultivate the staple crops of sugar, tobacco and cotton in the New World could not have been supplied in quantities adequate to permit large-scale production. Slavery was

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<sup>398</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, *Views in Favor of Slavery*', p. 42-43.

<sup>399</sup> Eric Williams, p. 5.

<sup>400</sup> Edward Gibbon Wakefield (20 March 1796 – 16 May 1862) was a British politician, the driving force behind much of the early colonisation of South Australia, and later New Zealand.

necessary for this, and to get slaves the Europeans turned first to the aborigines and then to Africa.<sup>401</sup>

As it was argued later about the Cuban and Brazilian slave trade, it was no use saying it was an unholy or unchristian occupation. It was a lucrative trade, and that was enough.<sup>402</sup>

James Evan Baillie exhorted his fellow citizens not to lay the axe at the root of their own prosperity by supporting the abolition of slavery in the islands.<sup>403</sup>

It was estimated in 1790 that the 138 ships which sailed from Liverpool for Africa represented a capital of over a million pounds. Liverpool's own probable loss from the abolition of the slave trade was then computed at over seven and a half million pounds. Abolition, it was said, would ruin the town. It would destroy the foundation of its commerce and the first cause of the national industry and wealth. "What vain pretence of liberty," it was asked in Liverpool, "can infatuate people to run into so much licentiousness as to assert a trade is unlawful which custom immemorial, and various Acts of Parliament, have ratified and given a sanction to?"<sup>404</sup>

But, after all, "it was the capital made in the African slave trade that built some of our docks. It was the price of human flesh and blood that gave us a start." Some of those who made their fortunes out of the slave trade had soft hearts under their waistcoats for the poor of Liverpool, while the profits from slave trading represented "an influx of wealth which, perhaps, no consideration would induce a commercial community to relinquish."<sup>405</sup>

## **Slavery to Save Negroes**

It has been further reported that:

Under the gospel, it has brought within the range of gospel influence, millions of Ham's descendants among ourselves, who but for this institution, would have sunk down to eternal ruin; knowing not God, and strangers to the gospel. In their bondage here on earth, they have been much better provided for, and great multitudes of them have been made the freemen of the Lord Jesus Christ, and left this world rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Eric Williams, p. 6.

<sup>402</sup> *ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>403</sup> *ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>404</sup> *ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>405</sup> *ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>406</sup> *ibid*, p. 55.

It transpires from the above that all people including the prophets of Israel who had died even before the advent of Jesus Christ had sunk down to eternal ruin because they did not know the God introduced by St. Paul. Mr. Stringfellow, however continues to supports slavery as reported below:

It has been the will and pleasure of God to institute slavery by a law of his own, in that kingdom over which he immediately presided; and to give it his sanction when instituted by the laws of men. The most elevated morality is enjoined under both Testaments, upon the parties in this relation. There is nothing in the relation inconsistent with its exercise.<sup>407</sup>

Slavery as a succor of slaves or Negroes has also been described in the following:

The Church also supported the slave trade. The Spaniards saw in it an opportunity of converting the heathen, and the Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans were heavily involved in sugar cultivation which meant slave-holding. The story is told of an old elder of the Church in Newport who would invariably, the Sunday following the arrival of a slaver from the coast, thank God that "another cargo of benighted beings had been brought to a land where they could have the benefit of a gospel dispensation."<sup>408</sup>

Earl St. Vincent pleaded that **life on the plantations was for the Negro a veritable paradise** as compared with his existence in Africa. Abolition was a "damned and cursed doctrine, held only by hypocrites." The gallant admiral's sentiments were not entirely divorced from more material considerations. He received over 6,000 compensation in 1837 for the ownership of 418 slaves in Jamaica.<sup>409</sup>

Boswell on the other hand stated emphatically that to abolish the slave trade was to shut the gates of mercy on mankind, and dubbed Wilberforce a "dwarf with big resounding name."<sup>410</sup>

Thomas Babington Macaulay later Lord Macaulay had been a prominent defender of slavery.

Disraeli, like many to follow in Britain and the United States, condemned emancipation as the greatest blunder ever committed by the English people. It was "an exciting topic . . .

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<sup>407</sup> *ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>408</sup> *ibid*, p. 42.

<sup>409</sup> *ibid*, p. 44.

<sup>410</sup> *ibid*, p. 49.

addressed to an insular people of strong purpose, but very deficient information.<sup>411</sup>

## **Would Horses be the Next?**

Carlyle, too, wrote an essay:

"The Nigger Question," sneering at the "Exeter-Hallery and other tragic Tomfoolery" which, proceeding on the false principle that all men were equal, had made of the West Indies a Black Ireland. **Would horses be the next to be emancipated?** he asked. He contrasted the "beautiful Blacks sitting there up to the ears in pumpkins, and doleful Whites sitting here without potatoes to eat." It was only the white man who had given value to the West Indies, and the "**indolent two-legged cattle**" should be forced to work. The abuses of slavery should be abolished, and the precious thing in it saved: the Negro "has an indisputable and perpetual right to be compelled ... to do competent work for his living."<sup>412</sup>

Many Christian writers have been counting slavery as special blessings of the Lord for the slaveholders while any disobedience or laxity on the part of the slaves had been taken as an evil or a blasphemy against the Lord warranting proper chastisement of the slaves. Mr. Stringfellow elaborates the point by saying that:

But what purpose was to be answered by this devotion of the slave? The Apostle answers, "that the name of God and his doctrine (of subordination to the law-making power) be not blasphemed," as they certainly would by a contrary course on the part of the servant, for the most obvious reason in the world; while the sword would have been drawn against the gospel, and a war of extermination waged against its propagators, in every province of the Roman Empire, for there was slavery in all; and so it would be now.<sup>413</sup>

In the plain words, the apostles as well as Jesus Christ were themselves afraid of chastisement from the Romans. Hence, in the absence of any commandment from the Lord, they were advising their followers to save their skin. They, therefore, took all care not to disturb the social order and harmony in the Empire being fully aware of the fact that any uprising of the Jews or other slaves to overthrow the Roman yoke would be suicidal

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<sup>411</sup> ibid, p. 194-195.

<sup>412</sup> ibid, p. 195-196.

<sup>413</sup> ibid, p. 47.

for the subjects of Rome. Both Peter and Paul felt obliged to preach to the slaves that they must continue submitting to the authorities even if they mistreated them. To justify the preachings of earlier Christian fathers, therefore, a contemporaneous writer observes that:

A slave uprising would do the gospel a disservice — and prove a direct threat to an oppressive Roman establishment (e.g., "Masters, release your slaves"; or, "Slaves, throw off your chains."). Rome would quash flagrant opposition with speedy, lethal force. So Peter's admonition to unjustly treated slaves implies a suffering endured without retaliation. Suffering in itself is not good; but the right response in the midst of suffering is commendable.<sup>414</sup>

The same writer also refers to Paul's writing that Christian masters and slaves are brothers and part of Christ's body. (1Ti 6:2) That Christians-slaves and masters alike—belong to Christ (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). As such, spiritual status is more fundamental and freeing than physical sufferings and wretchedness in the world.

From the above, we conclude that the early Christian fathers were not concerned with the miserable condition of the slaves in the world nor could they dare to preach compassion to the Roman masters. This equality in spirit reflected the other worldliness of St. Paul and Peter who instead of taking any steps towards mitigation of miserable condition of the slaves tried to appease the slaves by suggesting their equality with masters in spirit. They, therefore, preached the slaves for devoted service to the masters in the manner they were obliged towards the Almighty. Such teachings had been a great service towards peace and perpetuity of the Roman Empire. As regards obligations of believers towards the Lord they stood relegated to the secondary importance as compared to the obedience and service of the Romans.

Mr. Stringfellow is bent upon proving divine sanction for slavery and devoted obedience of the slaves towards

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<sup>414</sup> Paul Copan, *Enrichment Journal* (Springfield 2011).

their masters. Referring to St. Paul's letter to the Romans, he observes:

And in the 13th chapter, from the 1st to the end of the 7th verse, he recognizes human government as an ordinance of God, which the followers of Christ are to obey, honor, and support; not only from dread of punishment, but for conscience sake; which I believe abolitionism refuses most positively to do, to such governments as from the force of circumstances even permit slavery.<sup>415</sup>

The emergence of colonies in the Americas and the need to find labourers saw Europeans turn their attention to Africa with some arguing that the Transatlantic Slave Trade would enable Africans, especially the 'Mohammedans', to come into contact with Christianity and 'civilisation' in the Americas, albeit as slaves. It was even argued that the favourable trade winds from Africa to the Americas were evidence of this providential design.<sup>416</sup>

We are, therefore, astonished to learn that the innocent and illiterate Negros of Africa and especially the Mohammedans had been provided the golden opportunity to benefit from the Christianity and civilization in the Americas. Although we shall be discussing in detail the claim of benevolence of the Western Christianity and civilization on the slaves in later chapters yet the fakeness of argument is also obvious from the quotation reproduced below. Stringfellow himself observed that:

Religion was also a driving force during slavery in the Americas. Once they arrived at their new locales the enslaved Africans were subjected to various processes to make them more compliant, and Christianity formed part of this. Ironically, although the assertion of evangelisation was one of the justifications for enslaving Africans, very little missionary work actually took place during the early years. In short, religion got in the way of a moneymaking venture by taking Africans away from their work. It also taught them potentially subversive ideas and made it hard to justify the cruel mistreatment of fellow Christians.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 44.

<sup>416</sup> Richard Reddie, Article: *Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition*, BBC, January, 2007.

<sup>417</sup> Richard Reddie, Article: *Atlantic Slave Trade and Abolition*, BBC, January, 2007.

Early Christians and the slaves were advised to follow the Christ in suffering all atrocities of the Romans without any ill-feelings towards them. Peter also advised the Christians to keep in mind the example of Jesus Christ. As such, slavery in the New Testament was a much different world of institutionalized chattel (property) slavery.

Our discussion so far may suffice to prove that Bible had up held the institution of slavery as the verdict of God and it also had been the prime source sanctioning perpetuity of slavery in the World. We shall, therefore, be reverting to the Christian practice and insistence on continuation of slavery after recapitulating some important events of history during the medieval period. Hence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of the book, we shall be discussing the colonization period, the cruelest treatment with the slaves along with the efforts of the abolitionists to eradicate slavery in the world.

## **Perpetuity of Slavery**

Perpetuity of slavery in Christianity used to be asserted as a permanent condition of the slaves up to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1729 the Attorney General ruled that baptism did not bestow freedom or make any alteration in the temporal condition of the slave; in addition the slave did not become free by being brought to England, and once in England the owner could legally compel his return to the plantations. So eminent an authority as Sir William Blackstone held that "with respect to any right the master may have lawfully acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas, this will remain exactly in the same state of subjection for life," in England or elsewhere.<sup>418</sup>

William Joseph Harper (1790-1847) said: "*Slavery anticipates the benefits of civilization and retards the evils of civilization.*" Advocating perpetuity of slavery, Thornton Stringfellow said:

When God entered into covenant with Abraham, it was with

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<sup>418</sup> Eric Williams, p. 45.

him as a slaveholder; that when he took his posterity by the hand in Egypt, five hundred years afterwards to confirm the promise made to Abraham, it was done with them as slaveholders; that when he gave them a constitution of government, he gave them the right to perpetuate hereditary slavery; and that he did not for the fifteen hundred years of their national existence, express disapprobation towards the institution.<sup>419</sup>

After giving several other reasons to uphold slavery, Mr. Stringfellow concludes that:

And lastly, I have shown, that in an attempt by his professed followers to disturb this relation in the Apostolic churches, Jesus orders that fellowship shall be disclaimed with all such disciples, as seditious persons — whose conduct was not only dangerous to the State, but destructive to the true character of the gospel dispensation. (...) They regulate the duties of this and all other lawful relations among men — but they cannot abolish any relation, ordained or sanctioned of God, as is slavery.<sup>420</sup>

All this stressed on coexistence of Christianity with the slavery, so much so that the Christians could not even imagine of Christianity in the absence of slavery.

The Law of Moses had it that:

"If slaves run away from their owners and come to you for protection, do not send them back. They may live in any of your towns that they choose, and you are not to treat them harshly."<sup>421</sup>

St. Paul, however, had no regard for the Law of Moses. His letter to Philemon pertains to a slave named Onesimus who had run away from his master to seek protection from St. Paul. The law of the LORD quoted above had emphatically forbidden the believers to return any fugitive slave. Instead of returning to his ex-master the slave should have been provided all sorts of protection by St. Paul. In utter disregard to the law of the LORD, St. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon with his letter stating that:

I am sending him back to you now, and with him goes my heart. I would like to keep him here with me, while I am in

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<sup>419</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 53.

<sup>420</sup> ibid, p. 83.

<sup>421</sup> Deu 23:15-16 GNB.

prison for the gospel's sake, so that he could help me in your place. However, I do not want to force you to help me; rather, I would like for you to do it of your own free will. So I will not do anything unless you agree. It may be that Onesimus was away from you for a short time so that you might have him back for all time. And now he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: he is a dear brother in Christ. How much he means to me! And how much more he will mean to you, both as a slave and as a brother in the Lord!<sup>422</sup>

It is, therefore, pertinent to note that St. Paul neither recommended freedom of the slave nor kind treatment with him. By referring to the slave as a brother in the Lord, St. Paul equated the slave with the master only in the spiritual realm. In the temporal life, however, he did not utter a single word to relieve the miseries and distress of the slaves. Instead of denouncing cruelties of the masters and the Roman authorities, he felt him satisfied merely by advising the Christians for better treatment of the slaves (Eph 6:9, Col 4:1). On the whole, Jesus Christ and all the earlier Christian fathers took violence against the slaves as a normal state of affairs (Mat 18:23-35, Luk 19:11-27). They, therefore, did not take the risk of advising Romans either to manumit the slaves or to deal with them in a compassionate manner. Paul wrote that:

Slaves are to submit themselves to their masters and please them in all things. They must not talk back to them or steal from them. Instead, they must show that they are always good and faithful, so as to bring credit to the teaching about God our Savior in all they do.<sup>423</sup>

Prior to this, the cruel masters were abhorred as oppressors. The Jews as well as other nations under the Romans were obeying them only under duress. Romans already had made earnest efforts to assimilate Asian people by introducing one culture, one language, one law and obedience to the emperor without any success. Jews and other nations under them took the Romans as oppressors. Such nations, therefore, had been looking for some opportunity to overthrow the yoke of slavery

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<sup>422</sup> Phm 1:12-16 GNB.

<sup>423</sup> Tit 2:9-10 GNB.

under the Romans. Ratio of slaves against the Romans had been two to one. The dissatisfaction of the slaves had been endangering peace in the empire. Besides causing huge loss of lives, the Servile Wars brought a set back to the economy, and internal strength of the Romans which prevented further expansion of the empire.

The Romans had long been restoring peace and tranquility through extremely ruthless use of force. In spite of this, they failed to attain any enduring peace or cohesion among their subjects. It was during such circumstances that St. Paul came up with a universal or all embracing theology i.e. Catholicism to unite the Jews, the gentiles, the pagans and followers of the mythological religions under the banners of Rome. Instead of subjugating the lands or people through force and coercion, he adopted the policy of striking on the foundation of their faith. By his ingenious interpretation of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation of mankind, he started uniting the Jews as well as the gentiles throughout the Roman territory. Instead of hating the Roman masters, therefore, St. Paul taught the slaves to obey their worldly masters wholeheartedly in the manner they served Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the Almighty.

To controvert the abolitionists, Mr. Stringfellow says that:

Their hostility must be transferred from us to God, who established slavery by law in that kingdom over which he condescended to preside; and to Jesus, who recognized it as a relation established in Israel by his father, and in the Roman government by men, which he bound his followers to obey and honor. (...) I have placed before my reader what is in the Bible, to prove that slavery has the sanction of God, and is not sinful.<sup>424</sup>

This Biblical warrant for slavery continued to be appealed for the defense of slavery during about two thousand years in the past and during the development of the slave-trade of the western nations from 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Church itself emerged as the

<sup>424</sup> Thornton Stringfellow, p. 84.

greatest feudal Lord owning hundreds of thousands of slaves put under hard task masters on the land and trade of the church throughout the Christendom. Inhuman treatment with the slaves patronized by the church and rigid Christianity of dark ages, therefore, had no parallel in the annals of history. Lecky<sup>425</sup>, the Christian historian of the nineteenth century, says:

**The Christian millennium from the fourth to the fourteenth century was one of the most contemptible periods of history.**<sup>426</sup>

Even the well acclaimed period of renaissance and enlightenment in the west had no positive impact on the mental attitude of the colonizers to accept any equality in the human rights for all the descendants of Adam and Eve. The successors of the Roman Empire continued to follow the same policy of enslaving the free people or importing the slaves from abroad.

The great historian, Gibbon, observes that:

**The banners of the church had never been seen on the side of the people.**<sup>427</sup>

According to Will Durant:

Probably it was through centuries of slavery that our race acquired its traditions and habits of toil. (...) After some centuries men took it for granted; Aristotle argued for slavery as natural and inevitable, and St. Paul gave his benediction to what must have seemed, by his time, a divinely ordained institution.<sup>428</sup>

In the Introduction to his book, *Christianity in History*, Mr. Ahmed. D. Azhar says:

Incidentally, Christianity was happily married to power in the days of the Roman Emperor Constantine, too—against the people [stress added]. The wedlock continued even into the

<sup>425</sup> William Edward Hartpole Lecky OM (1838–1903) was an Irish historian and political theorist.

<sup>426</sup> As quoted by Ahmed D Azhar, *Christianity in History* (Lahore: Sh. Muhamad Ashraf, Kashmīrī Bāzār, 1968), p. 8.

<sup>427</sup> As quoted by A. D. Azhar, *Christianity in Hist.*, p. 8.

<sup>428</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, Rockefeller Center, 1954 1<sup>st</sup> pub. in 1935), p. 20.

protestant times, and Luther, the great reformer, was himself on the side of the Princes, not of the people, and as a matter of fact urged the Princes to wipe out the peasants revolting against their tyranny if they (the Princes) wanted to enter the Kingdom of God! (Pamphlet by Luther: *Wider die Mordischen und Raubischen Ratter Der Bauern*—'Against the Murderous Peasants'). *His reform was Anti-pope not Pro-people, It was a palace revolution* [stress added]. It would, incidentally, be typical of all Christian reforms in most Christian centuries.<sup>429</sup>

In view of this and numerous other instances from history, **we find Bertrand Russell fully justified ascribing the opposition of every human movement to Christianity.**

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<sup>429</sup> Ahmed D Azhar, *Christianity in History* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, Kashmīrī Bāzār, 1968), p. 8.

## MORAL REVOLUTION THROUGH ISLAM

Each and every nation in the world had been continuing to assert its superiority over other people in respect of civilization and virtuous deeds. By concealing their own shortcomings or misdeeds, they bitterly criticized their adversaries by transferring even their own misdeeds to others. Hence instead of truth, falsehood becomes their mainstay to propagate everything good for themselves and to denounce their rivals. The most conspicuous examples of such trends can be found in the writings of the so-called orientalists, priests, historians and other Christian writers especially in the West.

One can only perceive the true nature of things by looking through plain glasses instead of examining the same with a biased opinion or by using the tinted glasses. Unluckily the untruth and prejudice being the fountain head of most of the vices in the world leave no room for objective appraisal of the events and the facts. Most of the writers in the west had been the missionaries with the assignment to find and highlight lacunas or faults in the Qur'ān, Islamic literature or the person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) so that the people may abhor Islam. The priests among the missionaries left no stone unturned to present a horrible and perverted picture of Islam and the Muslims. Such research, though served well the interests of the west but drove their readers away from the truth and blessings of the Almighty.

Although Muslims never claimed that each and every member of their society was an angel than a man yet we can confidently assert that Muslims had always been the only *Ummah* who observed the law of the Lord more diligently. They did not claim any privileges as their birthright nor do they pretend superiority over other

human beings on earth. All the descendants of Adam are accepted as human beings and brethren of the Muslims enjoying equality of rights with them. It is here that the **Muslims excel all other nations in humaneness and magnanimity.** Existence of some black sheep in the Muslim ranks cannot, however, be denied. Such instances if any must be rare in the Muslims as compared to the Christians, the Hindus and the Jews etc.

Muslims have a strong conviction that Islam is based entirely on the revelations from Almighty Allah received through his last and final prophet Muhammad (pbAh). Since the Almighty is the creator of nature, therefore, all revelations from Him must accord with the nature in each and every respect. As such, Islam is not only a revealed religion but also the **religion of nature and the religion of humanity.** As creator, evolver and sustainer of each and everything in the universe, the Almighty alone deserves to be worshiped and obeyed by all His creatures. Next to the human duties towards the Lord come the divinely enjoined duties of mankind towards each other. Fulfillment of both the obligations referred to above may ensure successful, happy and prosperous life on earth besides entitling the believers to earn everlasting bliss of the Almighty in the Hereafter.

People of Book had undoubtedly been the best guided people in the world. Even so, most of them went astray from the straight path. There also had been some good natured, god-fearing and extremely pious people among the Jews as well as the Christians, yet their number had always been minimal while majority did not take the religion or the commandments of the Lord seriously. The difference between them and the Muslims had been of some degrees than of nature. With the exception of the pious people, some of the Jews and the Christians had been much more rebellious than the others. High moral characters were, therefore, rare to be found among the masses.

## **Human Rights in Islam**

Human Rights is a vast subject in Islam and may cover several volumes to describe them in detail. Due to paucity of time and space at our disposal, we shall be skipping over a vast part of human duties towards each other, to focus on relieving the miseries of mankind and the helpless conditions of the slaves. For this, we shall be presenting a cursory view of human history to substantiate our arguments with empirical evidence from history of man.

Let us reiterate that Islam has bestowed equality of rights between all the people in the world. Such rights are not restricted to any particular religion, gender, nation, race, color, group, language or a region. Almighty Allah was pleased to elevate all the sons of Adam over most of His creatures. They, therefore, have to abide by the law of the Lord. God said:

**O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice,** as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.<sup>430</sup>

O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.<sup>431</sup>

Islam was, therefore, the first religion to include judicious and considerate treatment towards the slaves as one of the primary duties of man towards the Almighty. God bestowed honor on all human beings without any discrimination. He said:

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds,<sup>432</sup>

**O ye who believe! the law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave**

<sup>430</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:135 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>431</sup> ibid, 5:8.

<sup>432</sup> ibid, 95:4.

**for the slave, the woman for the woman.** But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude, this is a concession and a Mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty.<sup>433</sup>

We ordained therein for them: "**Life for life, eye for eye, nose or nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal.**" But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (No better than) wrong-doers.<sup>434</sup>

This means parity of basic rights of all individuals on earth. The Islamic concept of universal brotherhood of mankind has already been discussed in the first chapter of the book which need not be reiterated here.

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) was not satisfied merely by verbally announcing equality of status and rights of the slaves and the ex-slaves with the free people but he effectively put his teachings into practice during his life. After manumitting Zaid bin Haritha, his slave, he adopted him as his son and married him to Zainab the first cousin of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). The said Zaid bin Haritha was given command of seven expeditions i.e. Al-Qarada in November 624, Al-Jumum in September 627, Al-'Is in October 627, At-Taraf , Wadi al-Qura in November 627, Hisma, or Khushayn, in October 628 Zaid had been given over all command of the Battle of Mu'tah in September 629 where many companions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and leaders of the respected tribes of Quraysh and prominent figures from, Banu Aws, Banu Khizraj of Medina were given under his command. Among them were Abdullah bin Rawaha, *Ja'far Tayyar bin Abu Talib* and Khalid bin Waleed. Zayd, Ja'far and Abdullah stood martyred one after the other fighting against the huge army of the Romans. Ultimately, Khalid bin Waleed took over the command of the armies and fought so bravely against the Romans that they lost all hope of success against extremely small number of Muslim fighters. The battle being

<sup>433</sup> ibid, 2:178.

<sup>434</sup> ibid, 5:45.

indecisive, Muslim Armies returned to Medina under the command of Khalid bin Waleed.

About two years after the battle of Muta, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) was on his death bed when he decided to send another Army to Sham (Syria) under the leadership of Usama son of Zayd (the Slave) who was only 18 years old. Many of the most respected companions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) including *Sayyidina Umar* and other veteran fighters as well as leaders of various tribes were given under his command. The army had not yet left Medina when the Holy Prophet (pbAh) died in June 632 A.D. Consequently, the departure of the army was delayed for a few days. After the burial of the Holy Prophet (pbAh), Sayyidna Abu Bakr, the first successor of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) requested Usama to drop Sayyidna Umar to assist him at Medina in various problems arising due to the death of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). This shows that ever since the time of the Holy Prophet (pbAh), Muslims had always been treating their slaves or ex-slaves as their fully respected brethren. There never had been any bar on their assimilation in the Muslim society or their rising to power, leadership or acquisition of knowledge or property.

## **Ex-Slaves as Emirs (Governors)**

Similarly, during the Caliphate of Abdul Malik bin Marwan, Ata' bin Ribah was the chief of the people of Makkah, Ta'us bin Kaysan was chief of Yemen, Yazeeb bin Habeeb, the chief of Egyptians, Maqhol Al-Dimishqi, the Chief of Huzayl, Maymoon bin Mahram the chief of Jazeerah, Dahrak ibn Muzaham the chief of Haram, Hassan bin Abu al Hasan, the chief of Basrah. **All of them had been slaves.** Many of the slaves led various expeditions during the history of Islam. Both Tariq bin Zyad and Musa bin Nusair, the conquerors of Spain had been the manumitted slaves. There had been many Imams and the leaders of Muslims armies who belonged to the slave families in the past. Ahmad ibn Tülün (835-

884 AD, Arabic: طولون أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سُبَّاتٍ (originally Turkic slave-soldier was the founder of the Tulunid dynasty that ruled Egypt and Syria between 868 and 905. Sultan Mahmud (971-1030) the founder of Ghaznavid Empire had led about 17 raids on Indian territories to forestall the assaults of Hindu Rajas on his territories extending firstly up to Kabul and subsequently beyond Lahore presently in Pakistan. He was the son of Subakteen an ex-slave. Malik Ayaz, son of Aymāq Abu'n-Najm, was a slave of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Subsequently, he rose to the rank of a general in his army. As a complainant before the Almighty, Allama Iqbal tried to plead the case of Muslim Ummah by arguing that they had been showing their absolute submission before His commandments. It included the establishment of a class less society with universal brotherhood of man and equality of social status, rights and privileges. He says:

آگیا عینِ لِوَانی میں اگر وقت نماز قبلہ رو ہو کے زمیں بوس ہوئی قومِ حجاز  
 ایک ہی صفت میں کھڑے ہو گئے ٹوڈو ایاز نہ کوئی بندہ رہا اور نہ کوئی بندہ نواز  
 بندہ و صاحب و محتاج و غنی ایک ہوئے  
 تیری سرکار میں پچھے تو زیجی ایک ہوئے

An unknown poet has translated the same in the following manner:

When worship's ordained hour was come, and furious raged the battle's fray,  
 Those men of Hijaz, staunch in You, facing Your Ka'ba, bowed to pray.  
 Mahmood the king and slave Ayaz, in line, as equals, stood arrayed,  
 The lord was no more lord to slave: while both to the One Master prayed.  
 Slave or slave's master, rich or poor, no sense of difference then felt,  
 For each a brother was to each when in Your Presence, Lord, they knelt.

*Khandan-e-Ghulaman* (the Slave Dynasty) of India who ruled Delhi (1206-1290) started with Qutb al-Din Aibak a slave of Shahab al-Din Ghawri (1149-1206) and his successors were either slaves or sons/ daughter of slaves. Even during the periods of Crusades Imad al-Din Zengi and his son Nur al-Din Zengi the famous defenders of Islamic territories were the ex-slaves of the Seljuks. Similarly, Mamluk Dynasty ruled Egypt and some adjoining countries from 1290-1517. Yet another important example had been the Mamluk Dynasty of

Iraq (1704-1831). Such instances may suffice to show that the Muslim society did not impose degradation or disability on those who stood enslaved due to war, destitution or any other incident during their lives. Slavery in Islam cannot cause a permanent stigma or scar on its victims nor a slave becomes a subhuman entity. Except for Islam, no other nation ever took effective steps up to 1865 AD to mortify, to mitigate or to eradicate slavery among them.

## **Equality Before Law**

The concept of universal brotherhood of mankind and equality of human rights are the peculiar teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) in which he excelled all other prophets of the Lord. Islam preaches a classless society without any distinctions such as Jews, English, French, Arabian, Priests, Brahmans, Shudras or the Negros. All descendants of Adam and Eve enjoy the same basic human rights irrespective of the fact that they are black, white, red or yellow, weak or strong, rich or poor, fat or slim etc. **There had been no concept of the divine rights of kings in Islam.** All were equal before the Law and no one could be above Law. No one could claim any privileges or immunities on the basis of ancestry, wealth, power or prestige. Islam neither accepts the concept of might is right nor that the king can do no wrong. All people are equal before the law in Islam and everyone will be accountable in accordance with his own deeds.

Narrated Samurah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) Said: **If anyone kills his slave, we shall kill him, and if anyone cuts off the nose of his slave, we shall cut off his nose.<sup>435</sup>**

From the time of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we find the instances of the Muslim kings appearing before the courts of law to defend themselves against the complainants. Many of them had been particular about administration of justice as per

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<sup>435</sup> Abu Dawud 39, Number 4501:

guidance of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Out of thousands of such examples, therefore, it may suffice to quote only certain precepts of the Holy Prophet and traditions of the rightly guided caliphs of Islam.

### **1. Justice of Holy Prophet (pbAh)**

Banu Makhzoom was one of the wealthy clans of Quraish. They were among three most powerful and influential tribes in Mecca. Fatima bint Amr, paternal grandmother of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) belonged to this tribe. Amar bin Hisham (Abu Jahl), Umm Salama the Mother of the believers, Khalid bin Waleed the greatest general of Islam, Mugheera bin Abd allah, Hisham bin al-Mugheera etc. belonged to this tribe. A woman of the said tribe had committed a theft and the Holy Prophet (pbAh) felt no hesitation to decide the case as per law of the Lord.

Narrated 'Aisha: The people of Quraish worried about the lady from Bani Makhzum who had committed theft. They asked, "Who will intercede for her with Allah's Apostle?" Some said, "No one dare to do so except Usama bin Zaid the beloved one to Allah's Apostle." When Usama spoke about that to Allah's Apostle Allah's Apostle said, (to him), "Do you try to intercede for somebody in a case connected with Allah's Prescribed Punishments?" Then he got up and delivered a sermon saying, "What destroyed the nations preceding you, was that if a noble amongst them stole, they would forgive him, and if a poor person amongst them stole, they would inflict Allah's Legal punishment on him. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad stole, I would cut off her hand."<sup>436</sup>

### **2. Justice of Omer the Great (RA)**

The Story of the son of Amr ibn Al Aas, with the Egyptian, is well-known, Amr was the governor of Egypt in the Caliphate of Umar Ibn Al Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him. Amr's son hit Egyptian during a horse race. As the Egyptian knew that Islam didn't allow that, he didn't keep silent. He travelled to madinah to complain to the Caliph. Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, ordered Amr and his son to come to Madinah. They all stood in front of the Caliph, who commanded the Egyptian to hit Amr's son until he was satisfied. Then he commanded him to hit the baldness of Amr himself, the governor of Egypt, because his position

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<sup>436</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 56, Hadith Number 681.

encouraged his son to hit the Egyptian. Umar uttered his great saying: "How do you enslave free born people?"<sup>437</sup>

### 3. Jabalah bin Aiham

Jabalah bin Aiham was the last ruler of Gassan ruling a vast territory in Syria and Jordan. He had commanded a Christian Arab army during the battle of Yarmouk in 636 AD. He converted to Islam in 638 AD.

Jabalah was conducting a pilgrimage in Mecca. During his tawaf around the kaaba a poor man mistakenly stepped on his robe, making Jabalah almost trip over. This angered Jabalah so much that he hit the man in the eye, after which the man went to the Caliph 'Umar bin Khattab, who then requested that Jabalah be summoned to trial. After displaying the facts of the case, 'Umar ordered that Jabalah be hit by the poor man on the eye in the same manner by which the man himself was hit, but Jabala resisted this saying "Is his eye like mine?" upon which the Caliph 'Umar responded that "Islam has made you both equal." Jabalah requested that the Caliph carry out the sentence the next morning, and he fled to his village during the night. He then apostatized and went to the land of the Greeks (the Byzantines). This Jabalah was the king of Ghassan and the successor of al-Harith ibn-abi-Shimr.<sup>438</sup>

### 4. Yamani Shrouds and Umar bin Khattab

It had been reported by Fakhri that Hazrat Umar received a few shrouds from Yemen which he distributed among the people. Each person received one shroud. It is said that when Umar rose to the Mimber to address the gathering in the mosque, he was wearing Thoub i.e. the long shirt from the same shrouds. One man rose up from the audience and said: we shall not obey you because you have preferred yourself over others. Each Muslim had received one shroud while your shirt is made of two shrouds. Umar stopped and asked his son Abdullah bin Umar to reply. Abdullah stated that he had given his shroud to his father to prepare the shirt of his father. On this the protestor was satisfied and committed to obey all the

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<sup>437</sup> Kawther M. Alminawi, *Human Rights in Islam*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. 1993, p. 34-35.

<sup>438</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Jabalah ibn al-Aiham'.

just orders of Umar.<sup>439</sup>

## **5. Umar and Qazi Shurayh**

It has been reported that Sayyidina Umar purchased a horse from someone on the condition that he will pay the settled amount only if he likes the horse. To test the horse, he drove it but during the trial, the horse got a severe injury. Sayyidina Umar decided to return the horse to the owner who refused it. Both agreed to go to Shurayh Iraqi to decide the matter. Shurayh heard both the parties and decided that either Umar may return the horse in the condition he had taken it or purchase it for the settled price. Umar agreed to the decision and appreciating the justice of Shurayh made him the judge of Kufa where he served as Judge for about 60 years thereafter.<sup>440</sup>

## **6. Ali and a Jew**

Another well known incidence records Ali's shield being stolen. Ali recognised his shield when he saw it in the possession of a Jew. He instituted a claim in the court of Qadhi Shuraih who asked that Ali produce his witnesses to prove his claim. Ali presented his son and then his emancipated slave. According to Qadhi Shuraih the testimony of a son in favour of his father or an emancipated slave was not admissible, hence he ordered Ali to present another witness. When Ali was unable to do so, Qadhi Shuraih dismissed his original claim to the shield. Ali, the caliph of the time, emerged from the court cheerfully.

On seeing this high degree of justice where the leader of the Muslim world could lose a case in the face of a just ruling, the Jew recited the Muslim testification of faith embraced Islam. He later presented the shield to Ali saying that he did indeed steal the shield and that it did belonged to him. Ali responded: "I have made it a gift for you". Thereafter the Jew remained perpetually in the company of Ali and was martyred in the battle of Siffeen.<sup>441</sup>

## **7. Inaugural Speech of Caliph Abu Bakr**

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<sup>439</sup> Muhammad Hussain Haykal, *Umar Farooq-e-Azam (Urdu)*, tr. by Ghulam Rasool Mehr, (Lahore, Maktaba Jadeed, Mkld Rd., 1960), p. 590.

<sup>440</sup> ibid, p. 604.

<sup>441</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Shurayh al-Qadhi'.

O people, I have been appointed over you, though I am not the best among you. If I do well, then help me; and if I act wrongly, then correct me. Truthfulness is synonymous with fulfilling the trust, and lying is equivalent to treachery. **The weak among you is deemed strong by me, until I return to them that which is rightfully theirs, inshaAllah. And the strong among you is deemed weak by me, until I take from them what is rightfully (someone else's), inshaAllah.** (...) **Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger.** And if I disobey Allah and His Messenger, then I have no right to your obedience. Stand up now to pray, may Allah have mercy on you.<sup>442</sup>

Islam as such, proved an effective bridle and check to prevent the strong and greedy from oppressing the timid and the weak. Such people usually strive to encroach upon the rights of their weaker neighbors. Hence, the chief justices during the first century of Islam had been making no distinction between the Caliph and an ordinary person. Even subsequently, there had been many examples to summon the Caliph or the Sultan to the court to defend himself against the alleged injustice made to any person within his domain. The emirs and Sultans had always been submitting before the judgment of the Shariah court.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) about creating equality of rights between the ex-slaves and other free people are also evident from the fact that *Khalifah Umar* used to address *Bilal*, a manumitted slave of *Abu Bakr*, as *Sayyidina Bilal* i.e. our master or our leader Bilal.

Islam, therefore, is the fore-runner to teach moral excellence and to establish divinely guided human rights on earth. It emphatically negates existence of any privileged classes among mankind. All human beings are born free without any sin on them or any sanctification as a birthright. Individual start with a zero meter and their ultimate fate depends on their own efforts for the vice or the virtue.

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<sup>442</sup> Ibn Katheer, *Al-Bidaya wal-Nihayah*, (urdu), (Karachi: Nafees Academy, Urdu Bazar, 1989), Vol. 6, p. 1136.

All theologians, reformers, philosophers or thinkers, therefore, lag far behind Islam to inculcate the principle of the equality of human rights in the world. The Western nations especially are about 1435 years behind the Muslims to accept the Negroes as their brethren and co-equals in the manner the **Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) had successfully established a classless society of Arabs, non-Arabs, the blacks, the whites and others.** A Negro like Bilal bin Ribaha a freed slave of Abu Bakr was addressed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph Umar as *Sayyidna* Bilal i.e. our leader Bilal. Muslims used to join the blacks and whites to eat, to sit and to pray with them and to extend them all honor they deserved themselves. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

May Allah curse those people who keep away from partaking their meals with slaves.<sup>443</sup>

No society in the world except the Muslims had so far been able to organize itself on the universal principle of equity and brotherhood of all the descendants of Adam on earth.

As stated earlier, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) had been given the special assignment of preaching the perfect and ultimate moral excellence to his followers.

Abū Hurayrah relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "**I have only been sent to perfect good moral character**".<sup>444</sup>

Perfection of moral excellence was, therefore, the distinctive assignment of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). By his personal example, therefore, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) proved himself a paragon of virtue as regards meticulous obedience to the commandments of the Lord. He had no match for his kind, sympathetic, charitable and commendable treatment with his companions, the relatives, the weak, the poor, the women, the children, the slaves and all other sects of the human beings. Besides his personal example, he also gave elaborate law for best human conduct towards other human beings covering all aspects of their lives. The teachings of the

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<sup>443</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 162. (*Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*).

<sup>444</sup> Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadith No. 8595.

Holy Prophet (pbAh) in this respect are extensive enough to cover many volumes. Due to limitation of time as well as space at our disposal, we shall be making a cursory reference about some of those rights to focus on slaves and cruel treatment of various classes of human beings. In another book, however, we shall be discussing the plight of women in the human history and the way to their emancipation as suggested by Islam.

## Negation of Special Privileges or Birthrights

Almighty Allah emphatically denied the special privileges or birth rights claimed by the Jews, the Brahmins and the Christian priests or others. Caste, color, region or language also had no value before the Almighty. In the Hereafter, the Lord will be judging each individual in accordance with his own conduct on earth:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.<sup>445</sup>

According to the Qur'ān:

(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and his beloved." Say: "Why then doth He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are but men,- of the men he hath created: He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punishment whom He pleaseth: and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and unto Him is the final goal (of all)<sup>446</sup>

Another verse of the Qur'ān also endorsed the same:

Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul: nor is thy Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His Servants.<sup>447</sup>

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) clearly told his followers about their duties towards the Almighty and their duties towards other human beings as their brethren on earth. He also disclosed that **the Almighty may forgive sins**

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<sup>445</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Book 32, Ch. 8, Number 6221, also 6219, 6220:

<sup>446</sup> *ibid*, 5:18.

<sup>447</sup> *ibid*, 41:46.

**committed against Him to whom so ever He might please. As regards their transgressions towards each other the Lord will not forgive the same.** Only the wronged one would be competent to forgive any wrong done to him.

It was in the said background that the Holy Prophet (pbAh) preached love, peace, freedom, justice, equality of rights, social status and sanctity of life for all human beings irrespective of their ancestry, wealth, color or place of origin. No one, therefore, could claim any privilege on the basis of his birth right or any other distinction. Only those deserve honor and appreciation from the Lord who behave righteously due to fear of the Almighty. Islam, therefore, condemns all the transgressors, persecutors or oppressors of other human beings. A detailed law has been given to specify human duties towards each other. There is a long list covering duties of believers towards the parents, spouses, children, relatives, orphans, widows, slaves, poor, foreigners as well as followers of faiths other than Islam.

## **Imam Ghazali<sup>448</sup> on Slavery**

It has been reported that:

It is in the essence of the Islamic ideal that all men are equal before the Law, and perhaps arguing from this truth, the master tells his sovereign that he should deal with the people in such a manner that they should be agreeable to the rule of Law, quoting the Apostolic Tradition the best of the Muslims are those who seek mutual love and respect and the worst those who deal with each other in anger. It is this principle which is the basis of the Islamic theory of slavery, and Ghazzali quotes the Apostle of Islam again that the masters should feed and clothe the slaves in exactly the same manner as themselves, should immediately sell them off when they are of no use to them and not to keep God's creatures in perpetual agony, always remembering that if it were the will of God, He would have turned the tables making the slaves themselves masters of their present owners. Ghazzali says that **it is the right of the slaves not to be deprived of food and clothes and never to be looked down upon, and if they do anything wrong, it should remind the**

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<sup>448</sup> Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058-1111) was a Muslim theologian, jurist, philosopher and mystic of Persian descent.

**master of all the sins against God's command which he himself commits every day.**<sup>449</sup>

## Equality of the Social Status

By the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh), slavery was prevailing throughout the world and the people of the book used to take it as divinely approved institution for mankind. Prophet Muhammad's efforts to eradicate slavery gradually and the reforms introduced by him to improve the social status and treatment with the slaves may, therefore, be evaluated keeping in view the background of slavery in the Bible and the practice of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and other societies in the world. In the afore-stated background, Prophet Muhammad's preaching of universal brotherhood and declaration of equality of human rights was a unique social reform in the world.

The Greek and Roman philosophers believed that slaves were mere chattel or two legged cattle devoid of any soul or humanity in them. Some of them held that God had created certain human beings only to serve the super-humans like Greeks or the Romans. Slaves, as such, had no basic human rights at all. The viewpoint of Islam, therefore, is exactly opposite the view of the Greek philosophers like Aristotle who said:

Any man who is born in slavery is born for slavery; there is nothing surer. Slaves in their chains lose everything, even the desire to be rid of them; they love their servitude, like the companions of Odysseus, who loved their *brutishness*. If there are slaves by nature, it is because slaves have been made against nature. The first slaves were made by force, and they remained so through cowardice. ("The first Societies', *The Social Contract*, 47).<sup>450</sup>

Almighty Allah dispelled the idea out-rightly with His emphatic proclamation that:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and

<sup>449</sup> Haroon Khan Sherwani, *El-Ghazzali on the Theory and Practice of Politics*, (Published in 'Islamic Culture', July 1935, by Iftikhar Afzal Printers, Lahore), p. 470.

<sup>450</sup> Judith Still, *Derrida and Other Animals*, p. 268-269.

a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).<sup>451</sup>

It is pertinent to note here that by its preachings and precepts as quoted above, Islam had established universal brotherhood among all the descendants of Adam and Eve irrespective of their origin or background. As against this, freedom, justice and equality to all mankind were acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly only in 1948 which we know as Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In spite of the said announcement, no equality between human beings could ever be practiced in most of the nations of the world. The Shudras in India could never think of any equality between them and the higher races. Readers may be astonished to know that Shudras or the Dalits are by no means an ignorable minority. According to certain newspapers, **there are more or less 400 million Dalits in India.**

Similarly, the Negroes and the red Indians in the Americas still continue to aspire for equality with the white races of Europe. The apartheid practice by Britishers in South Africa up to 1994 was perhaps the worst example of the English pride of superiority over the native blacks in South Africa. Contrary to this, full equality of rights and social status had been established throughout the Islamic territory during the days of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). His pronouncement quoted above and especially his sermon during Hajjat al Wada about 1425 years ago had successfully achieved what the UNO achieved only in 1948. As regards human rights the UNO lags behind the Muslim law and practice by more than 1326 years in the past.

Muslims in fact never forgot the traditions and teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) about universal brotherhood of mankind. There is nothing in the teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to patronize enslavement or legitimacy of slavery as a permanent institution in Islam.

<sup>451</sup> Al-Qur'ān 49:13 Yusuf Ali.

Instead of sanctioning slavery, therefore, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) tolerated it as a prevailing evil taken to be accidental or temporary phase in the life of human beings. Slavery was a necessary evil which needed to be eradicated through gradual reformation than an abrupt step to ban it. To enslave a free person was, however, declared as a crime against the humanity and the Lord God of the Universe. While the western philosophers had been believing that 'men turned into slaves were men turned into animals', Islam preached humanity of the slaves at par with their masters. It, therefore, granted all basic human rights to the slaves except their freedom which had been recommended repeatedly as most virtuous acts of a Muslim. There is no concept of natural slavery in Islam. All people are born free and only contingent accidents turn them into slaves which may be taken as a temporary phase than turning humankind into chattels.

## No Compulsion in Religion

Islam did not enjoin on the Prophet (pbAh) or his followers to convert people to Islam by force or coercion. God said:

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.<sup>452</sup>

So render good counsel, for you are simply required to counsel, and are not invested with the authority to compel them.<sup>453</sup>

As such, the believers are duty bound only to preach the word of God politely to all people they can. Their duty is only to present essentials of faith to them with good reason and leave them free to choose between the good and bad thereafter. All merits and demerits about acceptance and rejection of Islam depend on the volitional and independent choice of the individuals. The

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<sup>452</sup> Al-Quran 16:25 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>453</sup> Al-Quran 88:21-22 Maududi.

Lord shall be rewarding them in accordance with the option adopted freely by them. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) or the believers were forbidden to compel anyone to be a Muslim. Such compulsions obviate the purpose of test and trial by the Lord. The Lord said:

If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, -all who are on earth! wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!<sup>454</sup>

As stated earlier, all creatures before man and jinn were subjected to such a compulsion of nature that they enjoyed no freedom to violate any commandment of the Lord. They, as such, could neither commit a sin nor deserved any appreciation for their virtuousness. Such creatures were older and far more numerous than the human beings and the Jinn. Billions and billions of angels had been worshiping the Lord day and night without any lapse in their conduct since their creation. It was merely for a test and trial that the Almighty had created two new species free from the natural compulsion. Free will and independence were, therefore, the preconditions for the test of man. As such, those who compel others to accept any particular faith are wrongly interfering between men and their Creator. The Almighty, therefore, enjoined on the Muslims merely to present the true creed and its benefits to the non-believers. They, however, were strictly forbidden to make them believe by hook or by crook. God ordained that:

**Let there be no compulsion in religion:** Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.<sup>455</sup>

History also has ample evidence to the fact that the Muslim community had no perceptible tradition of imposing Islam on anyone against his will simply because neither the convert can derive any benefit from his conversion through force nor it gives any credit to the oppressor. As against them, those who compelled someone to proselytize him have committed a heinous crime by violating the commandment of the Lord. In

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<sup>454</sup> Al-Qur'ān 10:99 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>455</sup> ibid, 2:256.

spite of this, we cannot deny the possibility of violation of law by some reckless people among the Muslims. Such cases, however, may be among the exceptions than a norm in the community.

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) has been so mindful of the amiable treatment with other faiths that he said:

He who wrongs a Jew or a Christian will have my self as accuser on the Day of Judgment.

In view of the above, we find no substance in the propaganda of Christian missionaries, historians and the orientalists that the sword was the main source for the rapid spread of Islam. Their untruth, however, stands exposed through history and writings of Muslims as well as fair-minded scholars in the West.

## **Slaves as Captives of War**

Although Islam did not prohibit enslaving the captives of war yet the said bondage was not meant to last forever. The commandment of the LORD quoted below, seems to suggest freedom of the captives of War either through ransom or merely as a gesture of generosity towards the unbelievers. Almighty Allah revealed:

Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens. Thus (are ye commanded): but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others. But those who are slain in the Way of Allah,- He will never let their deeds be lost.<sup>456</sup>

The permission to keep the captives of war under bondage seems to be temporary instead of a permanent institution suggested in Islam. **The phrase 'until the war lays down its burden'** may, therefore, imply until the war ends or danger of war is over. It may be through decisive defeat of the enemy, some truce or other cause leading to peace. Muslims may, thereafter,

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<sup>456</sup> ibid, 47:4.

release the prisoners gratuitously, against ransom or in exchange with Muslim prisoners held by the enemy. In the earliest periods of Islam, Muslims had no prisons or other arrangements to keep the captives there. They, therefore, used to distribute the captives among the Army personnel or others such prisoners who could neither be released through ransom or in exchange of prisoners. In any case, they were required to treat prisoners and the captives with due kindness as long as they remain in their custody.

With the only exception of the prisoners of war which had usually been a temporary phase, Islam abhors slavery being a mismatch with the religion based on fear of the Almighty, universal brotherhood of mankind and equality of rights between all the sons of Adam on Earth. As such, although there had been no specific prohibition of slavery in the Qur'ān, yet both the Qur'ān and the Ahadith contain no permission for the Muslims to enslave the free people. The revelation about creation of mankind from a single pair makes them brethren of each other which implies equality of rights and status of the believers.

Through many of its injunctions, Islam has shown its disapproval for slavery. Islam has, therefore, exhorted the believers repeatedly to free the slaves for expiation of various types of sins or as a virtuous deed to please the LORD. In spite of all this, it did not prohibit slavery as an institution simply because its outright prohibition would have caused great chaos in the economy and social set up existing in the world. Even otherwise total elimination of slavery could only be possible if all the nations of the world agreed to respond on similar principles. In the absence of a worldwide emancipation program, therefore, one-sided action of the Muslims to free the captives of war could have created grievous problems for them. One-sided elimination of slavery could have set them at a great disadvantage against their enemies. Bondage arising out of war was, therefore, a necessary evil which Islam had to tolerate unwillingly until and unless other nations also reciprocated the good gesture of Islam. It was not,

therefore, expedient for the Muslim *Ummah* to take one-sided action to prohibit slavery especially when it pertained to the captives of war.

Except for the captives of war and those enslaved before the advent of Islam, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) did not approve any other form of slavery. Muslims could, however, purchase or sell those people who had already been enslaved by others and also their children born in slavery. Main purpose for the said permission was to extend better treatment towards the slaves or to manumit them for expiation of various sins or as a virtuous deed to please the LORD. The Holy Prophet (pbAh), his wives and many of his companions used to purchase and obtain slaves only to set them free immediately or after some time. Abdurrahman bin Auf, a wealthy and prominent companion of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) purchased about thirty thousand slaves during his life and set them free.

## **Debt Servitude**

The sale and purchase of children or personal sale of people to repay their debt or to meet other exigencies in the life was prohibited by the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Muslim administration and the individuals were duty bound to render financial help to all destitute or starving members of the society. No one in the Muslim State could purchase a free citizen to make him his slave. The Holy Prophet (pbAh), therefore, declared the verdict of the Almighty against such transgressors:

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Allah says, 'I will be against three persons on the Day of Resurrection: 1. One who makes a covenant in My Name, but he proves treacherous. 2. One who sells a free person (as a slave) and eats the price, 3. And one who employs a laborer and gets the full work done by him but does not pay him his wages.<sup>457</sup>

Islam prohibits all sources of such exploitation of man at the hands of men. Raids to capture men and women or

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<sup>457</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 34, Hadith Number 430:

to plunder others had no place in the Islamic community. Abduction of people was a serious crime.

## **Slavery as a Punishment of Crime**

While different other communities including the Romans in the ancient past and the Christians especially during the colonization period used to enslave people as punishment of their crimes, Islam had no provision for the same. Besides the above, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) introduced such valuable reforms to improve the nature, the social status and overall treatment regarding food, clothing and the working conditions of the so called slaves that no other civilized nation could reach the excellence and the beneficence shown by Islam towards the slaves. Other nations used to kill or enslave most of the people in the conquered lands. Islam did not allow the believers to kill or capture peaceful citizens who had not taken active part in the battle. Enemies could be killed only during the armed combats. All peaceful people sitting at homes or at their shops, working in the fields or factories etc. were left unmolested unless and until they deserved some punishment of their crimes or they engaged themselves into armed confrontation with the soldiers of Islam. There is no permission in the Qur'ān to capture or to enslave peaceful citizens or to keep them in bondage. The property of the vanquished people will be secure, women unmolested and venerated as sisters or mothers. The old men and the children had to be looked after properly.

Life, property, dignity and freedom to do business or to pursue their religious duties were ensured by the Islamic State. The non-muslim population in the conquered lands were called *Dhimmis* and the Muslim rulers could levy a mild state tax i.e. *Jizya* for providing them freedom, peace, justice and security in all aspects of life. *Dhimmis*, as such stood absolved from recruitment in the Army. They also enjoyed exemption from all other taxes such as *Zakat*, *Ushar*, expenses on the Army as enjoined on the Muslims.

It has been reported that when at the Conquest of Makkah in the 8 A.H. (629 A.D.), the Holy Prophet (pbAh) entered the city, he issued a general proclamation to the Army.

"Verily I say as my brother Joseph said: This day there shall be no upbraiding of you nor reproach. God forgiveth you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful."<sup>458</sup>

Do not attack an injured person. Do not chase anyone who is fleeing. Do not kill a captive. And, he who has shut his door is safe and secure.<sup>459</sup>

## **Sanctification (تزييف) of the Believers**

About 1850 years before the birth of Jesus Christ Abraham had separated Hagar, his wife, along with first born Ishmael as a suckling child to serve at Kaaba in the wilderness of Makkah. About 15 years later, he visited them and with the help of Ishmael, he raised the walls of Kaaba there. After completion of the walls, Abraham dedicated Kaaba to the Lord. Ishmael had to serve as guardian of the first house of the Lord. He was, therefore, duty bound to sanctify the house of the Lord, to compass it round, to make it suitable for retreat, bowing and prostrating of the people before the Lord. The Almighty reveals the event with His injunctions and the prayer of Abraham in the following:

**124.** and remember that Abraham was tried by His Lord with certain commands, which He fulfilled: He said: "I will make Thee an Imam to the Nations." He pleaded: "And also (Imams) from My offspring!" He answered: "But My promise is not within the reach of evil-doers." **125.** remember we made the House a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham As a place of prayer; and we covenanted with Abraham and Isma'il, that They should sanctify My House for those who compass it round, or use it As a retreat, or bow, or prostrate themselves (therein In prayer). **126.** and remember Abraham said: "My Lord, make This a City of Peace, and feed its people with fruits,-such of them As believe In Allah and the Last Day." He said: "(Yea), and such As reject Faith,-for a while will I grant them their

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<sup>458</sup> Martin Lings, *Muhammad*, p. 301.

<sup>459</sup>

pleasure, but will soon drive them to the torment of Fire,- an evil destination (indeed)!<sup>460</sup>

Accepting the prayer of Abraham, the Almighty made Kaaba as a place of assembly for men and a place of safety in such a manner that no other place on earth can rival with Makkah in this respect. Makkah was, therefore, the only city promised and provided with all types of fruit throughout the year. The supplications of Abraham also contained the following:

**127.** and remember Abraham and Isma'il raised the foundations of the House (with This prayer): "Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us: for Thou art the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. **128.** "Our Lord! make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of Our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (will); and Show us Our place for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for Thou art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful."<sup>461</sup>

This part of the prayer had also been fully accepted by the Almighty. Towards the end of his prayer, Abraham said:

رَبَّنَا وَأَعْثُ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِنْهُمْ يَتَلَوُ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُرَكِّبُهُمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
الْغَفُورُ الْحَكِيمُ

129. "Our Lord! send amongst them an Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them In Scripture and Wisdom, and sanctify them: for Thou art the Exalted In Might, the Wise."<sup>462</sup>

The last verse of the prayer as quoted above consists of the nucleus of the prayer of Abraham. It contained four specific entreaties.

- 1.** The earnest supplication for sending a prophet to the people of Makkah from among themselves with distinctive features quoted below. Such prophet could be no one else than the distinguished Prophet promised by the Lord.
- 2.** That the prophet may recite to them the signs of the Lord.

<sup>460</sup> Al-Quran 2:124-126 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>461</sup> ibid, 2:127-128.

<sup>462</sup> Al-Quran 2:129 Yusuf Ali.

**3.** That the Prophet may teach them the book of the Lord and guide them in all matters of wisdom in the world.

**4.** That the prophet may sanctify the believers.

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) fulfilled all invocations in the prayers of Abraham in a commendable manner.

**Perhaps, the last one i.e. the sanctification of believers was the distinctive privilege and assignment of the Holy Prophet of Islam.** The Almighty conferred great favor on the believers by responding the prayer of Abraham exactly as per his supplication. God said:

Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.<sup>463</sup>

The matter of sanctification has again been stressed in the following:

A similar (favour have ye already received) in that We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, rehearsing to you Our Signs, and sanctifying you, and instructing you in Scripture and Wisdom, and in new knowledge.<sup>464</sup>

Allama Yousuf Ali has commented on the verse that:

Allah was perfecting religion and fulfilling the prayer for the future made by Abraham. That prayer was threefold: (1) That Makkah should be a sacred Sanctuary (2:126); (2) that a truly believing (Muslim) nation should be raised, with places of devotion there (2:128); and (3) that a messenger should be sent among the Arabs with certain qualities (2:129), which are set out there and again repeated here to complete the argument.

At another place, the Almighty refers to the same

It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, **to sanctify them**, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest

<sup>463</sup> ibid 3:164.

<sup>464</sup> ibid 2:151.

error.<sup>465</sup>

Although all prophets had been advised to sanctify their people but unluckily people did not receive them properly. In spite of hectic efforts for about 40 years in the desert, Moses failed to inculcate godliness in the Israelites and to teach them devotion and sacrifice to please the Lord. Instead of selfless service and obedience to the commandments of the Lord, they preferred their temporal gains. As regards Jesus, he gave ideal instructions for utmost devotion to the Lord and the Prophet (pbAh) yet he had no time to implement his teachings during the short duration of three years of his mission on Earth.

While all the prophets prior to Muhammad had been guiding their people about wisdom and revealing to them the teachings as well as the signs of the Lord yet **no one among them could sanctify his people by inculcating in them selflessness and utter surrender before the will of the Lord** in the manner, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) could accomplish his task with the blessings of the Lord. Israelites beings stiff-necked people very often refused to obey Moses and commandments of the Lord. The Lord, therefore, chastised them again and again. The Jews during the missionary period of Jesus did not receive him properly. Many of disciples had wavering faith and according to the New Testament all his companions had fled away from him deserting him to his fate at the hands of the Sanhedrin and the Romans.

Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) was, therefore, the only messenger of Allah who took it as a special assignment for him in addition to his routine assignments like the teachings of the Qur'ān and comprehensive guidance in matters of life to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The special stress on sanctification تزكية نفس is, however, evident from various revelations in the Qur'ān i.e. 2:129, 2:151, 3:164, 9:103, 4:49, 24:21 and 62:2.

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<sup>465</sup> ibid 62:2.

It may, therefore, be noted that the **word** بِرْكَيْهِ in verse 129 quoted above imply to sanctify, to purify, to prosper, to grow or to cleanse the people from their impurities, selfishness, pride, greed, lusts and other vices to make people acceptable to the Lord. Purification of the souls was, therefore, a special as well as conspicuous part of the duties of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). It involves constant teachings accompanied by implementation and practice during the lives of the believers. The Prophet, therefore, spent about 23 years to teach people to abstain from unlawful foods and drinks, shameful deeds and lusts for sex, wealth, power and other gratifications prohibited by Islam. Fasting in the company of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and struggle for establishing the kingdom of the Lord on earth was a good training for sanctification. زکوٰۃ (Giving alms to the poor and especially the Zakat meaning purification or sanctification) was a training to suppress greediness and selfishness in them. Preferring the needs of other people over our needs was a great lesson given by the Holy Prophet (pbAh). The laws of war and numerous codes of conduct provided to the Muslims went a long way to purify the believers. These and many other reformations ended in creating the best society in the world as certified by the Almighty himself.

As compared to the Israelites and the Christians, the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) proved to be devout worshipers taking utmost care to follow the guidance given to them. Their assiduous and submissive response to the commandments of the Lord earned appraisal from the Almighty who acknowledged that:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرًا أُخْرَجْتُ لِلَّئَسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آتَنَّ  
أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَكُانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثُرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ .

Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are

perverted transgressors<sup>466</sup>.

It is pertinent to note here that the appreciation of the Lord as quoted above was by no means unconditional, absolute or ever-lasting certificate of superiority for believers in Islam. The approbation was based neither on some racial distinction, color, language nor region of the believers. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) had also foretold that:

Abdullah reported: It was asked from Allah's Apostle who amongst the people were the best. He said: (People) of my generation, then those next to them, then those next to them, then there would come a people whose evidence would precede their oath and their oath would precede their evidence. Ibrahim said: They forbade us to make vows and bear witness when we were too young.<sup>467</sup>

'Abdullah (b. Mas'ud) reported Allah's Apostle as saying: The best among people are of my generation, then those next to them. (The narrator said): I do not know whether (he said) it three times or four times. Then there would follow after them such persons whose evidence would precede the oath, and in case of some others, the oath (would precede) the evidence.<sup>468</sup>

(See also: *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 48, Hadith Number 819, 820.)

Unlike the Jews asserting themselves as the chosen race or the Christians claiming to be the sons of God, the Muslims enjoyed no special recognition or privileges over other members of the human society except through the rectitude based on fear of their accountability and impartial judgment of the Lord to reward each individual exactly in accordance with his deeds. The veracity of the saying of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) is evident from the fact that there occurred a gradual decline in the characters of the Muslims over the times. Even so many among the Muslim Ummah continue to be the practical observes of the faith and teachings of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) without any match from other people of the book.

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<sup>466</sup> ibid 3:110.

<sup>467</sup> Sahih Muslim, Chapter 51, Book 31, Hadith Number 6151:

<sup>468</sup> ibid, Hadith Number 6153:

# ISLAMIC REFORMS TO MITIGATE SLAVERY

Although some of Islamic reforms about slavery have already been discussed to show difference between the Roman law and traditions vis-à-vis Islamic law and traditions yet many other aspects related to slaves shall be discussed in the present chapter. We shall, therefore, be focusing on the guidance of Islam for benevolent and compassionate treatment with the oppressed classes of mankind and especially the slaves.

## **Slavery and the Romans**

The Roman society usually took slavery as a natural part of Greco-Roman culture about which it has been said that:

Slavery in the Roman Empire was a fact of life. Most people could not imagine a society without slaves. Some people spoke out against the mistreatment of slaves, and there were slave revolts, but no abolitionist movement existed.

The fate of a slave depended largely on the temperament of his or her master. Masters could punish slaves brutally for real or perceived infractions. Sexual abuse of slaves was also common.<sup>469</sup>

We are fully aware of the fact that slavery existed throughout the world at the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). To prohibit it abruptly could have created numerous social as well as economic problems to the community. Instead of supporting or prohibiting slavery out rightly, therefore, the holy Prophet (pbAh) introduced gradual but effective reforms to mitigate it immediately and to pave the way towards its ultimate abolition at a future time. Referring to slavery, John L. Esposito has observed that:

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<sup>469</sup> Katy E. Valentine, *Bible Odyssey*, (Society of Biblical Literature, © 2016).

Slavery was common in pre-Islamic and contemporary societies in the Mediterranean basin, Asia, and Africa. Early Islamic Dogma assumed its existence as part of society and set out to mitigate the conditions of human bondage. Islamic law defined slavery as an intrusive practice: **it forbade the enslavement of free members of Islamic society, including dhimmis (non-Muslims) residing in the abode of Islam.** The Shari'ah (divine law) regarded as legal slaves only those non-Muslims who were imprisoned or bought beyond the borders of Islamic rule, or the sons and daughters of slaves already in captivity. Furthermore, Islam's contention that man is basically free (*al-asl huwa al-hurriyah*) forbade the enslavement of foundlings<sup>470</sup> and orphans. The manumission of slaves ('itq) was condoned as a meritorious act. Islamic law offered several procedures of manumission through a declaration, a will, or a grant of enfranchisement.<sup>471</sup>

The article further records that:

**Slaves were not to be mutilated or killed by their master.** Yet the master owned the slave's labor and property and was entitled to his or her sexual submission.<sup>472</sup> Slaves

<sup>470</sup> An infant that has been abandoned by its parents and is discovered and cared for by others.

<sup>471</sup> *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. by John L. Esposito, V. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), *Slavery*, p. 79.

<sup>472</sup> Mr. Esposito seems to have misunderstood the Islamic injunctions and practice about sexual submission of slaves. Islam, in fact, does not allow any sex out of the wed lock. No male slave can be subjected to any sex in Islam except his lawful marriage with some woman. Slave women, however, do not enjoy free will. As such, they can be subjected to sexual submission before their masters. The holy Prophet (pbAh), however, never had sex with any of the slave women unless and until they agreed to marry him. The tradition, however, is not binding upon the Muslims who had been allotted the custody of certain slaves. Such masters have the first right to marry any of the women in their custody. No formalities are attached with the marriage of the master with such women. **Anyhow, whosoever enters into sexual relationship with any of the slave women is obliged to take all responsibilities of the woman as regards her protection, subsistence, children and permanent attachment with her. Such women acquire the sanctity of the wife of the master who cannot transfer them through sale or gift to anyone else. Children from such women are freeborn persons enjoying parity of rights including inheritance with other children of the master from his freeborn wives. No one could use women in their custody as sex slaves or prostitutes.** Injunctions in the Qur'an and Sunnah stress on marriage with the women pleasing their masters. Such permission aims at chastity, than being lustful or having illicit

could be bought and sold at the owner's will. A slave was not entirely responsible for his or her actions and was not expected to adhere to the same rigid codes of conduct demanded of a free Muslim. In criminal cases slaves were punished less severely than free Muslims, and sometimes the law required that their master be punished in their stead.<sup>473</sup>

All this shows deep understanding of the nature of slavery due to which Islam has not been as rigid with them as with free believers to abide by the law of the Lord in a strict manner. God knew full well about the psyche, the circumstances and problems of the slaves. Hence in case of violation of certain prohibitions, the slaves were awarded milder punishments as compared to the free members of the Islamic society.

Mr. Esposito did not keep in mind that Islam has no concept of free sex or wild oat sowing. While Islam has strictly prohibited any sex out of a wed lock yet sex under lawful means is considered more virtuous than abstention, virginity, celibacy or the hermitage. Aside from Islamic injunctions, we find most of the prophets of the Lord living a normal married life with family, relatives and the companions. There can be no better way of living than that of the Prophets.

## **Islam Discarded the Term Slavery**

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) was much concerned about the degradation of the Slaves. To elevate the social status of the captives of war and for better affiliations with the slaves, he said:

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (pbAh) said: None of you must say: "My slave" (abdi) and "My slave-woman" (amati), and a slave must not say: "My lord" (rabbi or rabbati). The master (of a slave) should say: "My young man" (fataya) and "My young woman" (fatati), and a slave should say "My master" (sayyidi) and "My mistress" (sayyidati), for you are all

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sex with the slaves (Al-Qur'ān 4:25). For further details please refer to our book '*Islam and Emancipation of Women*' chapter 'Concubineage'. Please also refer to the topic 'Marriage of Slaves' in present chapter of the book.

<sup>473</sup> John L. Esposito, V. 4, Slavery, p. 80.

(Allah's slave and the Lord is Allah, Most High.<sup>474</sup>

The hadith quoted above, therefore, makes it abundantly clear that the people covered under '*ma malakat aymanukum*' are human beings like us whom God temporarily put under our administrative control. They enjoy all basic human rights except their freedom and cannot claim inheritance from their masters. The Holy Prophet (pbAh), therefore, forbade the believers to address them as '*abdi*' i.e. my slave. The master must address him or her as my son or my daughter. Similarly, the person termed as slave was directed to address his master as '*Sayyidi*' or '*Sayyidati*', i.e. 'my Leader or my Mistress. Other words used for slaves are '*Fata*' meaning young man or '*Fatah*' meaning young woman. The term '*Khadim*' i.e. one who serves or '*Jariyah*' meaning a young girl can also be applied to refer to them.

All this means that Islam in fact did not acknowledge slavery as a divinely sanctioned institution or a permanent condition of human beings. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) even forbade his followers to use the term slave for the captives of war or other persons purchased by the Muslim community (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, Chapter 41, Hadith Number 4957). To dispense with the term slavery, therefore, the Qur'ān used another term i.e. '*ma malakat aymanukum*' for captives of war or other people rightfully possessed by the believers. '*Ma malakat aymanukum*' means 'those whom your right hands possess'. This shows that slaves may be treated as subordinates or laborers under their masters yet they are to be treated like human beings by all means. Masters, enjoy no absolute rights over them as had been the practice of Romans and others. Instead of treating the so called slaves as chattel, a thing or an animal, the Muslims were enjoined to absorb slaves into the Muslim societies as their brethren and human beings like them.

## **The Qisaas of a slave**

In case of Qisaas, Islam holds free man and a slave at par. The Qur'ān says:

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<sup>474</sup> *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Chapter 41, Hadith Number 4957.

We ordained therein for them: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal. "But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (No better than) wrong-doers.<sup>475</sup>

It is pertinent to note that the verse quoted above is general in its application. It applies to free men as well as to the slaves. Whosoever kills a freeman or a slave or hurts him injuriously must be punished in the like manner as per the Law of the Lord quoted earlier (*Al-Qur'ān* 5:45). The Lord, therefore, creates no difference between the killing of a free man or the killing of a slave. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) also said that:

The blood of all Muslims is equal.<sup>476</sup>

Hanafi Jurists, therefore, conclude that a free man may be killed for a slave and a slave for a free man. Any aggressor must be awarded a punishment equal to the wrong done by him. Both parties must, however, abstain from further transgression. Patience is the better course for them.

And if ye do catch them out, catch them out no worse than they catch you out: But if ye show patience, that is indeed the best (course) for those who are patient.<sup>477</sup>

(...) Thus, if anyone commits aggression against you, attack him just as he has attacked you - **but remain conscious of God, and know that God is with those who are conscious of Him.**<sup>478</sup>

The Almighty prohibited the believers to take life of a free man or a slave except for dispensation of justice. Allah has made all lives sacred and whosoever kills anyone wrongfully, his heirs have the authority to seek retribution. God says:

Nor take life - which Allah has made sacred - except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority(to demand qisas or to forgive): but let him not

<sup>475</sup> *Al-Qur'ān*, 5:45 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>476</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 146. (from *Ahkam ul Qur'ān.*)

<sup>477</sup> *Al-Qur'ān* 16:126 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>478</sup> *ibid* 2:194 (Allama Assad).

exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law).<sup>479</sup>

Qisas of a slave has been stressed specifically in the following. Samurah Narrated that:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) Said: If anyone kills his slave, we shall kill him, and if anyone cuts off the nose of his slave, we shall cut off his nose.<sup>480</sup>

It is, therefore, clear from the above that any wrongful injury done to a slave will attract the same type of injury for the master or the oppressor.

The Prophet (pbAh) also said:

**If anyone castrates his slave, we will castrate him.**

## **Equal Share for Slaves in Spoils**

Islam as promulgator of universal brotherhood of mankind granted equality of rights to slaves to share the spoils with other believers. The Historian, Ibn Athir, has written in Tarikh al-Kamil that:

Sayyidina Abu Bakr (ra) maintained equality in the payments from the state treasury between the predecessors and laterday entrants to Islam, and the free men and slaves, and the men and women.<sup>481</sup>

## **Milder Punishment to Slaves**

The Almighty being fully aware of the social oppression, psychological submission or worldly obligations of the slaves ordained milder or lesser punishment to them as compared to the regular punishments for certain crimes enjoined for the free people. Islamic jurists agree that retribution in certain sins of the slaves are half that of free men. As such, whereas, the prescribed punishment for a particular crime is eighty stripes to a free man, the slave will be punished only with 40 stripes.

The Christian practice in America had been opposite of the same. A Christian writer had written that:

The Europeans are accustomed to dispute with the Sudanese

<sup>479</sup> Al-Qur'ān 17:33 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>480</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 39, Hadeeth, Number 4501:

<sup>481</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 155. (*Tareekh Ibn Athir*, V-2, p. 132).

over property, and they receive large sums of money from them in the name of different kinds of unjust taxes. **The white men perpetrate cruelty on the black and they beat them, take away their property, use their women with no compunction and let the poor people go hungry.** Thus, these people fled from their country which is now deserted.<sup>482</sup>

Fouillee has said:

Strange events take place in the United States which are no way worthy of it. The Blacks love the white woman dearly and sometimes have sex with them too. **The lynch law<sup>483</sup> requires that such people should be smeared with coaltar and then burnt like a lamp. The negro officers are compelled to witness the ordeal.**<sup>484</sup>

It was due to kind, considerate and sympathetic treatment of the Muslims that the scholars and historians like Doughty, F. Denberg, W. G. Palgrave, Gustave Lebon, Snouck Hurgronje, Joseph Thompson, Bos Worth Smith, T. W. Arnold have extolled the munificent treatment of the Muslims towards the slaves. All this leads us to conclude that instead of taking slavery as divinely sanctioned institution like the Jews and the Christians, Islam accorded no approval to it except tolerating it merely as an evil prevalent throughout the world which had to be eliminated through a gradual reformation than taking abrupt step against it. Since war, power and exploitation had been the prime sources of slavery, and all other communities in the world took it for granted, therefore, one sided action on the part of Muslims could avail nothing unless and until all nations agreed to reciprocate the Islamic gesture of good will in this respect. In spite of this, Islam was the only religion to treat the slaves as human beings and treat them in a kind manner. To set them free was stressed again and again.

<sup>482</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 199. (from *Black Man's Burden.*)

<sup>483</sup> A law named after William Lynch (1742–1820), American vigilante. It pertains to the punishment of presumed crimes or offenses usually by death without due process of law (Merriam Websers)

<sup>484</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 199. (From Alfred Fouillee's *Temperament at Caractere*)

Although the Muslims were not strictly forbidden to possess the slaves or to utilize their services for their benefit yet they could not claim to be the absolute owners of the body and souls of the slaves nor could they use them as vocal instruments or inanimate part of their property. Believers had been enjoined to treat them as their own brethren. Manumission of slaves was propagated as extremely virtuous deed which could effectively expiate numerous sins committed by the people.

## **Kind Treatment with the Slaves a Means of Blessings**

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

Treating those under one's authority well, produce prosperity, but an evil nature produces evil fortune.<sup>485</sup>

Here are other *Ahadiths* of the Prophet (pbAh):

The Prophet has said: "If one of you is beating his servant and he calls upon Allah then restrain your hand from him".<sup>486</sup>

Rights of the slaves and good treatment towards them had been emphasized to such an extent that many of the companions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) preferred to free the slaves than to keep them under duress to earn the wrath of God.

Once the Prophet (pbAh) gave a slave to Abu al-Yatham al-Ansari with instructions to deal with him kindly. His wife said to him, "you will not be able to do that. It is better that you set him free." So, he freed him.<sup>487</sup>

Once, the Prophet (pbAh) gave a slave to Sayyidina Abu Zarr and instructed him to treat him kindly. He did treat him kindly by setting him free.<sup>488</sup>

## **Being Kind to a Servant**

Before the advent of the Holy Prophet (pbAh), the masters enjoyed unlimited rights to punish, to torture or

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<sup>485</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud* Book 41, Hadith Number 5143.

<sup>486</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 177. (from *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah* V-2. *Neel al-Awtar*, V7)

<sup>487</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 126. (from *Tirmizi*.)

<sup>488</sup> *ibid*, p. 126. (from *Al-Adab al-Mufrad*.)

even to kill their slaves. Mercy and forgiveness was unheard of. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) preached forgiveness of the slaves again and again.

Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Umar narrated: A man came to the Prophet and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, how many times may I forgive my servant?" He did not say anything. He asked again, "O Messenger of Allah, how many times may I forgive my "servant?" He said, "Seventy times every day."<sup>489</sup>

## Wrongful Punishments to Slaves

Islam has in fact forbidden the masters to punish the slaves (Sahih Abu Daud, Book 41, Hadith No. 5142). Any severe punishment to a slave had to be recompensed with this freedom. It shall be obligatory on all the Muslim community to render necessary help to the manumitted slave after his release:

Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-'As: A man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) crying for help. He said: His slave-girl, Apostle of Allah! He said: Woe to you, what happened with you? He said that it was an evil one. He saw the slave-girl of his master; he became jealous of him, and cut off his penis. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) said: Bring the man to me. The man was called, but people could not get control over him. The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) then said: Go away, you are free. **He asked: Apostle of Allah! upon whom does my help lie? He replied: On every believer, or he said: On every Muslim.**<sup>490</sup>

Suwayd ibn Muqarrin Muzani said, "We were seven brothers. We did not have but only one servant among us. One of us slapped him. So, the Prophet (SAW) commanded us to set him free."<sup>491</sup>

Zanaan Reported from Sayyidina Abdullah bin Umar who said I have heard the Prophet say:

Sayyidina Abu Mas'ud (RA) narrated I was beating my slave. suddenly, I heard a speaker behind me say, "Beware, O Abu Mas'ud ! Beware, O Abu Mas'ud !" So, I turned (my face) and as I was facing Allah's Messenger (SAW). He said, "**Allah is**

<sup>489</sup> Sahih Abu Dawud, Book 30, Ch. 31, Hadith 1956. also in Bukhari.

<sup>490</sup> Sahih Abu Dawud, Book 39, Hadeeth, Number 4504

<sup>491</sup> ibid, Chapter 15 Hadith No. 1547.

**more powerful over you than you are over him.**" After that, I never beat a servant.<sup>492</sup>

## Slaves Testimony Reliable

In acknowledgement of equal social status and rights of slaves, Islam takes testimony of a slave just equal to the testimony of a free Muslim. Sayyidina Anas (ra) was asked about the testimony of slaves, male and female. He said:

The testimony of a witness is proper provided he is a just man.<sup>493</sup>

Not only that, he also said:

I do not know of anyone who has rejected a slave's testimony.<sup>494</sup>

## Marriage of Slaves

Islam has not only stressed on feeding clothing and other facilities for the slaves but keeping in view their natural instincts, it has also directed that Muslims may arrange marriage of their slaves, males as well as females. The master in this respect was more entitled to marry the woman of his choice from among his slaves. Almighty Allah also revealed that:

If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, **Marry women** of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, **or (a captive) that your right hands possess**, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice.<sup>495</sup>

There is a Hadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) persuading Muslims to educate and marry the slave girls in their possession.

Narrated Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari: Allah's Apostle said, "If a person teaches his slave girl good manners properly, **educates her properly, and then manumits and marries**

<sup>492</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 30, Chapter 30, Hadith No. 1955. also in *Sahih Muslim*.

<sup>493</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 152. (from Ahkam ul Qur'an, V-1, p. 159)

<sup>494</sup> ibid, p. 153. (*القياس في الشع و الاسلام*).

<sup>495</sup> Al-Qur'an 4:3 (Yusuf Ali).

**her**, he will get a double reward. And if a man believes in Jesus and then believes in me, he will get a double reward. And if a slave fears his Lord (i.e. Allah) and obeys his masters, he too will get a double reward.”<sup>496</sup>

Note the difference between the Hindu treatment of Shudra and Dalits who haply overheard the Hindu scriptures. Similar had been the practice of the European colonizers in the American continents. Please refer to chapter on Slavery in the Modern Periods; topics ‘Opportunity to Learn, to Read or to Write Prohibited’ and ‘Anti-Literacy’, Vol. II of the book. As against them, Islam enjoined learning on each and every descendant of Adam and Eve on earth. One of such exhortations can be found in the following:

## **Free People can Marry the Slaves and Vice-Versa**

The Almighty Allah said:

If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women, they may **wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess**: And Allah hath full knowledge about your faith. Ye are one from another: **Wed them** with the leave of their owners, and **give them their dowers**, according to what is reasonable: They should be chaste, not lustful, nor taking paramours: when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, their punishment is half that for free women. This (permission)is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practise self-restraint. And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>497</sup>

As regards the term ‘Allah is oft-forgiving and most merciful’, it applies not to the masters but to the slave women forced to commit adultery.

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<sup>496</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 4, Book 55, Hadith No. 655:

<sup>497</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:25 Yusuf Ali.

## A slave or an ex-slave can marry a free woman

Islam removed all distinctions based on ancestry, wealth power or color. Slaves as human beings also had the right to be restored to the status of other Muslims and were entitled to satisfy their sex through lawful means. Almighty Allah, therefore, commanded that:

Marry those among you who are single, or the virtuous ones among your slaves, male or female: if they are in poverty, Allah will give them means out of His grace: for Allah encompassteth all, and he knoweth all things.<sup>498</sup>

Similarly, Muslims in general and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) in particular did not hesitate to marry slave women. In some cases, women were granted freedom before their marriage to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) while Mariya was granted freedom after she gave birth to Ibrahim the son of the Holy Prophet (pbAh).

Islam strictly forbids sex out of wedlock. Those who did not have the means to afford for marriage with a free woman are advised to be chaste or to marry slave women in their possession. Anyhow, prostitution had been forbidden as a grievous crime.

## Mukatibat

For manumission of the slaves we find the directive of the Almighty for *Mukatabat* مكاتب i.e. enjoining on the Muslims to enter into the deed of manumission in writing with those who have the capability to pay for their freedom. God said:

And write out a deed of manumission for such of your slaves that desire their freedom in lieu of payment – if you see any good in them – **and give them out of the wealth that Allah has given you And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution for the sake of the benefits of worldly life the while they desire to remain chaste.** And if anyone compels them to prostitution Allah will be most Pardoning, Much Merciful (to them) after their subjection to such

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<sup>498</sup> ibid 24:32.

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compulsion.<sup>499</sup>

The pardon quoted above pertains only to the slaves coerced for corruption by their masters. It has no coverage for the masters.

The verse quoted above has stressed on four different aspects.

- 1.** First of all it emphasizes chastity for those believers who do not have the means to marry themselves.
- 2.** It enjoins on the believers to enter into a deed of manumission in writing with those slaves who ask for it and have the capability to earn for their own living with some surplus to pay for the manumission.
- 3.** The masters of the slaves and others Muslims have also been ordered to give something from their own means to enable the slaves to pay for their freedom.
- 4.** During the period of ignorance the masters of the slaves in Arabia or other regions in the world used to force the slave women to earn for them through prostitution. Islam strictly forbade any such evil among the believers. In case, the slave women are compelled for prostitution by their masters, the masters will be accountable for their sins. Similarly, those who corrupt the wives of other men or their slaves stand excommunicated from the society of the believers.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: **If anyone corrupts (instigates) the wife of a man or his slave (against him), he is not from us.**<sup>500</sup>

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet prohibited the earnings of slave girls (through prostitution).<sup>501</sup>

As regards the commandment: "*give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you*" applies not only to the owners but also to other Muslims who may voluntarily give something out of their means to manumit the slave.

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<sup>499</sup> Al-Qur'ān 24:33 (Zafar Ishaq Ansari).

<sup>500</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 41, Hadith Number 5151.

<sup>501</sup> *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 36, Hadith Number 483.

The Qur'ān has also enjoined that:

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.<sup>502</sup>

## **Tadbeer**

Some people tell their slaves that "you shall be free on my death". After the said declaration the *Mudabbar* i.e. the person making declaration cannot sell the slave nor can he give him away as a gift to anyone else. If not freed earlier, the slave will be automatically free on the death of his master.

## **Food and Clothing of a Slave**

Proper treatment of slaves in respect of feeding and clothing was mandatory for the believers. Sayyidina Abu Dhar reported from the Holy prophet that:

Feed those of your slaves who please you from what you eat and clothe them with what you clothe yourselves, but sell those who do not please you and **do not punish Allah's creatures.**<sup>503</sup>

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) was so much concerned about the slaves that he referred to them as brethren of the believers. In addition to the instructions for clothing and feeding them like the masters themselves, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) also forbade the Muslims to burden their slaves with hard tasks. Anyhow, if perchance, some difficult assignment had to be given to a slave, the master must lend his hand to help him.

Narrated Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid: I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghfari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e. how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet. The Prophet asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one

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<sup>502</sup> Al-Qur'ān 9:60 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>503</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 41, Hadith Number 5142:

has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job)."<sup>504</sup>

At another occasion, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

لَحِيَ اللَّهُ قَوْمًا يَرْغِبُونَ عَنْ أَرْقَانِهِمْ إِنْ يَأْكُلُو مَعْهُمْ.

May Allah curse those people who keep away from partaking their meals with slaves.<sup>505</sup>

The companions of the Prophet (pbAh), therefore, had always been mindful of the human rights of the slaves. It has also been recorded that:

**Sayyidina Abdullah Ibn Umar gave his female slaves the same kind of golden jewellery to wear as he gave his daughters.**<sup>506</sup>

## Ex-Slaves as Leaders

Leading Muslims in prayer was a sign of virtue and veneration. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) used to lead the prayers himself. During his extreme illness, he appointed Abu Bakr to stand in his place. Consequently, on death of the Prophet (pbAh), Abu Bakr was chosen as the Khalifa of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). After Abu Bakr, Umr, Uthman and Ali had also been leading the prayers during the times of their caliphate respectively. Similarly, all other caliphs or chiefs of the army during the early centuries of Islam used to lead the Muslims in their prayers. The slaves also were fully entitled to the afore-stated nobility:

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: When the earliest emigrants came to Al-'Usba a place in Quba', before the arrival of the Prophet-Salim, the slave of Abu Hudhaifa, who knew the Qur'an more than the others used to lead them in prayer.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Hadith Number 721: See also *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 10, Book 15, Hadith Number 4094.

<sup>505</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 162. (*Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*).

<sup>506</sup> *Mutta Imam Malik*.

<sup>507</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 1, Book 11, Number 661.

## **Sayyidina Umar said about him that if Salim was alive, he would have entrusted the reigns of government to him.**

Narrated Anas: The Prophet said, "Listen and obey (your chief) even if an Ethiopian whose head is like a raisin were made your chief."<sup>508</sup>

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle said, "You should listen to and obey, your ruler even if he was an Ethiopian (black) slave whose head looks like a raisin."<sup>509</sup>

## **Manumission of Slaves**

Islam never aimed at enslaving the free people. In the battle of Hunayn, six thousand of the enemies were taken as prisoners. A fourteen member delegation under the membership of Zuhayr bin Surd came to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and requested him to release the prisoners. With the consent of the *Muhajirs* and *Ansaar*, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) granted freedom to all the prisoners at once. (Pg. 102 of *Slavery in Islam* by Maulana Saeed Ahmed).

We know that Lord's commandment for Zakah is one of the five pillars of Islam. The Almighty has also provided proper guidance to the believers about the avenues on which they are bound to spend the collections through Zakah.

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); **for those in bondage and in debt**; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.<sup>510</sup>

Among the meritorious deeds of the Muslims, The Qur'ān attaches preference to manumission over the prayer and the Zakah. It says:

لَيْسَ الِّرَّأْيُ أَنْ ثُلُوا وُجْوهُكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمُشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَ الِّرَّأْيُ مِنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالْيَتَامَةِ وَأَنَّ الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حِلَّهُ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىِ وَالْيَتَامَىِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَإِنَّ

<sup>508</sup> *ibid*, Number 662:

<sup>509</sup> *ibid*, Volume 9, Book 89, Number 256:

<sup>510</sup> Al-Qur'ān 9:60 Yusuf Ali.

السَّبِيلُ وَالسَّائِلُونَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَفَاقِمُ الصَّلَاةِ وَآتَى الرِّكَاهَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ بِعَهْدِهِ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالصَّرَاءِ وَجِنَّ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ (١٧٧)

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards east or West; but it is righteousness- to believe In Allah and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, **and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast In prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which ye have made;** and to be firm and patient, In pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. such are the people of truth, the Allah fearing.<sup>511</sup>

Muslims were, therefore, exhorted to spend out of their wealth for ransom of the captives of war or to help those slaves who had entered into Mukatibat with their masters.

In Surah al-Balad we find the Divine Writ:

And what will explain to Thee the path that is steep?- (it is:) freeing the bondman; or the giving of food In a Day of privation.<sup>512</sup>

#### ▪ ***Manumission of Slaves leads to paradise***

It is reported by Sayyidina Bara that a man came to the Prophet (pbAh) and asked him teach me a deed that will take me to paradise. The Prophet (pbAh) said set slaves free and release the necks.<sup>513</sup>

Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave." Said bin Marjana said that he narrated that Hadith to 'Ali bin Al-Husain and he freed his slave for whom 'Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him ten thousand Dirhams or one-thousand Dinars.<sup>514</sup>

Narrated Abu Dhar: I asked the Prophet, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and to fight for His

<sup>511</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:177 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>512</sup> ibid 90:12-14.

<sup>513</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, *Slavery in Islam*, (Karachi: DarulIshaat, Pakistan, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2000), p. 113. (from Imam Ahmed bin Hibān, Ibn Mardawiyah, *Bayhaqī*)

<sup>514</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Number 693

Cause." I then asked, "What is the best kind of manumission (of slaves)?" He replied, "The manumission of the most expensive slave and the most beloved by his master." I said, "If I cannot afford to do that?" He said, "Help the weak or do good for a person who cannot work for himself." I said, "If I cannot do that?" He said, "Refrain from harming others for this will be regarded as a charitable deed for your own good."<sup>515</sup>

#### ▪ ***Emancipation for Expiation for Sins***

The Muslims committing grievous crimes inadvertently may seek expiation of many of their sins by setting the slaves free. Almighty Allah enjoined on the Muslims that:

Never should a believer kill a believer; but (If it so happens) by mistake, (Compensation is due): If one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (Is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have treaty of Mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah: for Allah hath all knowledge and all wisdom.<sup>516</sup>

In case of the atonement of *Zihaar*<sup>517</sup>, freeing a slave is a must:

But those who divorce their wives by Zihar, then wish to go back on the words they uttered,- (It is ordained that such a one) should free a slave before they touch each other: Thus are ye admonished to perform: and Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.<sup>518</sup>

#### ▪ ***Freeing slave for expiation of Oath:***

The Qur'ān enjoins that:

<sup>515</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Number 693

<sup>516</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:92 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>517</sup> Zihar Definition: Muslim law: an insult proffered by a husband upon his wife which likens the wife to some prohibited female relation of his, and exposes the husband to divorce. Related Terms: Talaq. For example, zihar is committed by the Muslim husband saying to his Muslim wife: "You are like my mother."

<sup>518</sup> Al-Qur'ān 58:3 Yusuf Ali.

Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths: for expiation, feed ten indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families; or clothe them; or give a slave his freedom. If that is beyond your means, fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn. But keep to your oaths. Thus doth Allah make clear to you His signs, that ye may be grateful.<sup>519</sup>

#### ▪ **Atonement for Beating a Slave:**

"If anyone slaps his slave or beats him then the atonement is that he should set him free."<sup>520</sup>

#### ▪ **Setting Slaves free at Times of Solar and Lunar Eclipses:**

Narrated Asma' bint Abu Bakr: The Prophet ordered us to free slaves at the time of solar eclipses.<sup>521</sup>

Narrated Asma' bint Abu Bakr: We were ordered to free slaves at the time of lunar eclipses.<sup>522</sup>

#### ▪ **Setting Slave Free for Someone Else:**

Sa'd bin Ubaidah was the chief of the tribe of the Khazraj. He told the Prophet (pbAh) that his mother, Amrah daughter of Mas'ood had died while he was with the Prophet (pbAh) in the Battle of Uhud and Dumatal Jandal. He asked, "Would she get a reward if I set a slave free on her behalf." The Prophet (pbAh) said, "Yes".<sup>523</sup>

It is reported by Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' that they participated in the Battle of Tabook with the Prophet (pbAh) and they remembered one of their friends who had died. The Prophet (pbAh) said, "Set a slave free on his behalf. Against every limb of the slave, Allah will forgive his every limb."<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Al-Qur'ān 5:89 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>520</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 125. (from *Abu Dawood*, V-4, p-342, Cairo edition.)

<sup>521</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 3, Book 46, Number 695:

<sup>522</sup> *ibid*, Number 696:

<sup>523</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 126. (from *Muwatta Imam Maalik*.)

<sup>524</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 126. (from *Zarqani*.)

### ▪ ***Freedom for Umm Walad***

In case some master copulates with some captive or slave woman who bears a child, she is termed as *Umm Walad* and becomes entitled to a higher social status than that of other captives or the slaves. The Master cannot sell her nor exchange her with others. Their children are freeborn and enjoy full inheritance from their fathers. On the death of her husband, the master, the *Umm Walad* enjoyed the privilege of winning freedom automatically.

Another way for freedom of enslaved women was opened through advising the free Muslims to marry the slave girls. After such marriage the slave girls could neither be sold nor exchanged with others.

### **Prohibition of Re-enslavement**

The Roman law had the provision to re-enslave the former slaves or the manumitted slaves on different pretensions e.g.

Slaves, when manumitted by their owners, passed into the state of freedmen, [libertinitas] which we will consider in another part of this Inquiry. If, while in that rank, they were guilty of ingratitude towards their former masters, they might be reduced again to slavery, by way of punishment.<sup>525</sup>

Reduction to slavery was used as the penalty of ingratitude in freedmen under many of the later emperors; but the first, to whose reign we can trace it with perfect certainty, is Commodus.<sup>526</sup>

Slavery by birth depended upon the condition of the mother alone, and her master became owner of her offspring, born while she was his property. The mother's state was the rule for that of the child, in so far as regarded persons in bondage, among the Greeks and other ancient nations, and was borrowed from the principle which they naturally assumed with respect to the young of the inferior animals.<sup>527</sup>

**Islam does not allow enslavement of any ex-slave after freedom was once granted to him/her.** In this respect Islam treats sons of slave women in accordance

<sup>525</sup> William Blair, p. 46.

<sup>526</sup> ibid, p. 47.

<sup>527</sup> ibid, p. 48.

with the status of their partner. As such, children born from the masters of the slave women are free born children fully entitled to inheritance from him at par with other inheritors of the master.

## Slandering the Slave

Islam strictly forbids the believers to slander anyone. The slaves are also covered by similar injunctions. The holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

Sayyidina Abu Huraira reported that Abu Qasim, the Prophet (SAW) bestowed with the characteristic to repent, said, "If anyone accuses his slave, whether male or female, of adultery and they are innocent then Allah will inflict on him the prescribed punishment on the Day of Resurrection unless it is as he had said.<sup>528</sup>

The matter was of such importance that the Holy prophet did not forget to stress on kind treatment towards the slaves even on his death bed. *Sayyidina Ali*, therefore, reports that:

The last words which the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) spoke were: **Prayer, prayer; fear Allah about those whom your right hands possess.**<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>528</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 30, Chapter 31, Hadith No. 1954. also in *Sahih Bukhari* Hadith No. 6858.

<sup>529</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 41, Hadith Number 5137:



**Ch. 11-**

## TARGET ISLAM - I

Since attainment of supremacy in politics, power and wealth by the Christian West during colonization and especially from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Muslim decline made them a regular target of the Christian scholars, missionaries or the orientalists for the vices found in themselves or in any other people in the world. They, therefore, adopted a regular habit of blaming Islam with vast variety of accusations. One of the most conspicuous examples of perversion of facts can be found in their accusation that Islam had either sanctioned the slavery or had been responsible for its perpetuity in the world. There can be no greater untruth than that.

We know that the European nations started colonization of the Americas and the West Indies w.e.f the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Just a decade before that, they had traversed the route to India via Cape of Good Hope and soon, thereafter they reached Indonesia, Australia and China. The discovery of the new world in the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century had opened unlimited opportunities before the European nations to obtain lands, power, wealth and political dominance over the globe. Thousands and thousands of the islands were also colonized by them. Almost entire African Continent was divided among the Western Nations where they enslaved hundreds of millions of the Negroes transporting most of them to their colonies in the American continents. We have, therefore, devoted a substantial part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of the book to colonization, slave trade and economic development as well as industrialization of the West based on exploitation of natural and human resources of the weaker, backward and poor nations of Asia, Africa and other continents.

In spite of the fact that Christian west had been committing all types of brutalities with the slaves and

continued to drain out valuable resources of helpless people, they had large number of priests, historians, scholars, philosophers and the so-called orientalists deputed to divert attention of the educated people in the world from all evils of the Christian west and to malign Islam for the same. They, as such, were duty bound to spread disinformation about Islam. In the present context, therefore, we shall be referring only to three of such sources to represent the other accusers of Islam.

## **John J. Pool**

Critic John J. Pool (late) of Calcutta did his utmost to accuse Islam by willful perversion of facts. He was perhaps a paid British evangelist deputed to malign Islam and the Muslims. Referring to slavery, Mr. Pool observed that:

At the present day Christian nations, generally speaking are free from the curse of slavery. It is Heathen and Mohammedan nations that are the offenders, for slavery exists in Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Tunis, Morocco, Madagascar, China, and Afghanistan, and in a very modified degree in the Independent Native States of India.<sup>530</sup>

Writing during years 1890-92 or so, Pool could have hardly forgotten the 300 years of slavery practised by all the European nations and especially the Britishers to whom he belonged. For the benefit of the readers, therefore, we have devoted major part of chapter 2 of Volume II of the book under the title '*British Role in the Slave Trade*'. We hope by going through the details, the readers will be in a position to discover the truth.

To remind people like Mr. Pool, we may remind him that European powers had been holding almost 100% of the slave trade and almost every nation exceeded the other to enslave the African Negroes. The detail is given below:

### **Distribution of slaves (1519–1867)**

Destination	Percentage
Portuguese America	38.5%

<sup>530</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Mohammedanism* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Company, 1892), p. 385.

British America (minus North America)	18.4%
Spanish Empire	17.5%
French Americas	13.6%
British North America	6.45%
English Americas	3.25%
Dutch West Indies	2.0%
Danish West Indies	0.3%

The number of the Africans arrived in each area can be calculated taking into consideration that the total number of slaves was close to 10,000,000.<sup>531</sup>

Besides many other details in the book about the British involvement in colonization and slavery throughout the world, we shall be quoting some selected observations from different writers in the following:

**An eighteenth century writer has estimated the sterling value of the 303,737 slaves carried in 878 Liverpool ships between 1783 and 1793 at over fifteen million pounds.**<sup>532</sup>

**By 1840, Washington County, in the heart of the Delta, counted more than ten slaves for every white inhabitant. By 1850, each and every white family in the county held on average more than eighty slaves.**

The largest Delta planter, **Stephen Duncan**, owned **1,036 slaves** and the value of his property by the late 1850s was estimated at \$1.3 million.<sup>533</sup>

### **Britishers as the Largest Slave Traders:**

It is estimated that more than half of the entire slave trade took place during the 18th century, with the British, Portuguese and French being the main carriers of nine out of ten slaves abducted from Africa. **By the 1690s, the English were shipping the most slaves from West Africa. They maintained this position during the 18th century, becoming the biggest shippers of slaves across the Atlantic.**<sup>534</sup>

**In the 18th century, Britain had become the world's**

<sup>531</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Slave Trade'.

<sup>532</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 36.

<sup>533</sup> Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, p. 113.

<sup>534</sup> Wikipedia the Online Encyclopedia.

**largest slave trader.**<sup>535</sup>

Of the slave traders listed in 1755, 237 belonged to Bristol, 147 to London, and 89 to Liverpool.<sup>536</sup>

Liverpool [gained] the distinction of being the greatest slave trading port in the Old World.<sup>537</sup>

The importation into Jamaica from 1700 to 1786 was 610,000, and it has been estimated that the total import of slaves into all the British colonies between 1680 and 1786 was over two million.<sup>538</sup>

It was the slave and sugar trades which made Bristol the second city of England for the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century. "There is not," wrote a local annalist, "a brick in the city but what is cemented with the blood of a slave. Sumptuous mansions, luxurious living, liveried menials, were the produce of the wealth made from the sufferings and groans of the slaves bought and sold by the Bristol merchants."<sup>539</sup>

**British Monopoly on Slave Trade:**

This privilege was conceded to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 as one result of her victory in the War of the Spanish Succession, and produced popular rejoicings in the country. It was the proud boast of Chatham that his war with France had given England almost the entire control of the African coast and of the slave trade.<sup>540</sup>

This shows that Mr. Pool was intentionally concealing the heinous crimes of the British by his false representation of facts and blaming Muslims instead of the Britishers.

According to Mr. Pool, only some Muslim and other countries like Turkey, Egypt, Persia, Tunis, Morocco, Madagascar, China, and Afghanistan were the offenders for slavery importing large number of slaves from the African East Coast. These included also independent native states of India. The facts, however, were entirely different from the same as quoted in the following:

India replaced Africa; between 1833 and 1917, **Trinidad imported 145,000 East Indians and British Guiana**

<sup>535</sup> Wikipedia, Article, *Slavery in the United States, Revolutionary War and Freedom*,

<sup>536</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 32.

<sup>537</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 34.

<sup>538</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 32-33.

<sup>539</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 61.

<sup>540</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 40.

**238,000.** The pattern was the same for the other Caribbean colonies. Between 1854 and 1883 39,000 Indians were introduced into Guadeloupe; between 1853 and 1924, over 22,000 laborers from the Dutch East Indies and **34,000 from British India were carried to Dutch Guiana. Cuba, faced with a shortage of Negro slaves,** adopted the interesting experiment of using Negro slaves side by side with indentured Chinese coolies, and after emancipation turned to the teeming thousands of Haiti and the British West Indies.<sup>541</sup>

Hundreds of books have been written on the curse of slavery prevailing throughout the colonies under the control of USA, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Netherlands and Denmark etc. **Mr. Pool's own nation i.e. the Britishers had been the greatest offenders of the human rights so far as slavery is concerned.** Almost all the western nations had been committing heinous crimes by killing, capturing, transportation, overwork, torture, genocide and many other inhuman actions against the slaves. Although the present book contains lot of documented evidence for criminal actions against the slaves yet a few excerpts from different writings pertaining to UK, USA and Spain etc are being produced for perusal of the readers. The Wikipedia reports that:

Slavery had been practiced in British North America from early colonial days, and was recognized in all the Thirteen Colonies at the time of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.<sup>542</sup>

The expansion of slavery in the first eight decades after American independence drove the evolution and modernization of the United States. In the span of a single lifetime, the South grew from a narrow coastal strip of worn-out tobacco plantations to a continental cotton empire, and the United States grew into a modern, industrial, and capitalist economy.<sup>543</sup>

As of the 1860 Census, one may compute the following statistics on slaveholding: Enumerating slave schedules by county, 393,975 named persons **held 3,950,546 unnamed**

<sup>541</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 28-29.

<sup>542</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. *Slavery in the United States*.

<sup>543</sup> Amozon.com, Review of 'The Half Has Never Been Told' by Edward E. Baptist.

**slaves, for an average of about ten slaves per holder.**<sup>544</sup>

About St. Domingue, the Britannica records that:

So vast was the annual importation of enslaved negroes into this colony before 1791 that the ratio of the blacks to the whites was as 16 to 1. In that year there were in French St. Domingo 480,000 blacks, 24,000 mulattoes and only 30,000 whites.<sup>545</sup>

**Slave Populations:**

Both in Brazil and in the United States—the countries with the two largest slave populations in the Western Hemisphere – the end of slavery found the regions in which slaves had been concentrated poorer than other regions of these same countries.<sup>546</sup>

It was, therefore, very late that John J. Pool realized that slavery was a curse. Factually, slavery even in its crude form continued to exist in many Christian countries up to the year 1937 while **the states like Russia had been holding 516000 slaves in 2013 AD.**<sup>547</sup>

Mr. Pool was also incorrect to assert that only Heathen and Mohammedan nations were the offenders for slavery or that slavery existed only in the countries mentioned by him. Except for a minimal number of slaves in Turkey, other Muslim nations mentioned by Mr. Pool had little chances of possessing any mentionable number of slaves. This was the reason that Mr. Pool failed to provide any statistics about slavery in those countries.

No doubt Muslim or Heathen countries might be having a negligible number of slaves but the same could hardly be shown as a mentionable proportion or percentage of their total population. As against this, the readers will find the entire economies of the Romans, the Greeks, the Spartans and later on the American continents and many isles including the Caribbean islands being run merely through exploitation of slaves.

As regards slavery in the colonies from 1550 to 1937, we have devoted several chapters to reveal truth to the

<sup>544</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. '*Slavery in the United States*'.

<sup>545</sup> Enc. Britannica, 20:781.

<sup>546</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. '*Slavery in the United States*'.

<sup>547</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. '*Slavery in Russia*'

readers. The inhuman conduct with the slaves by the western nations during four centuries of colonization is, therefore, evident from the same.

In spite of the fact that there had been a large number of humanists and the abolitionists to propagate and promote the cause of the enslaved people right from the mid of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there had hardly been any impact of their efforts on the powerful enslavers i.e. the kings, the presidents, the politicians, the wealthy merchants and the great land lords growing cash crops in the American continents, Australia and thousands of islands in the Atlantic as well as the Pacific oceans. The condition did not show much improvement even up to UNO declaration of human rights in 1948. Even the said declaration fell short of the desired effects due to which there was another world conference on human rights held in Vienna in June 1993 in which 160 nations adopted a final declaration on human rights. As stated earlier, the declarations mentioned above only had the impact of ending the crude forms of slavery while it continued to exist throughout the world in new and beautiful names given to it.

#### ▪ **Hypocrisy of Mr. Pool**

Mr. John J. Poole's criticism of Muslims and Heathens was in fact an attempt to divert attention of the readers from the worst type of slavery practiced by the European nations especially in their colonies. It was a futile effort on the part of Mr. John J. Pool to sanitize the soiled past of the western nations by concealment of facts and also by transferring their guilt to the Muslims and others. Such an attempt can, therefore, be described as hypocrisy despised by Jesus Christ who had said that:

"Do not judge others, so that God will not judge you, for God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others. Why, then, do you look at the speck in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? How dare you say to your brother, 'Please, let me take that speck out of your eye,'

when you have a log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.<sup>548</sup>

Thank God that due to general unrest and revolts in most of the colonies, both in the Southern and the Northern American continents, the UK Parliament had to pass the bill aiming at abolishing the slave trade in 1807. Even so slave trade could not be put down in Brazil up to 1850. Although they abolished slavery in 1871 yet its implementation could not be carried into effect for decades thereafter. Many Christian scholars, priests, politicians, slave-traders in the west and planters in the colonies had been criticizing the British ban on slave-trade. Although Britain, France, Spain and many other South American countries had declared emancipation of slavery much before the Emancipation Declaration of US (1863-1865) yet Mr. Pool had no courage to condemn slavery before the last decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The reason was that many Jews or Christian scholars had been upholding slavery as a divinely sanctioned institution while slave holders were considered as the people specially blessed by God. In the Christian nations especially in Australia and in the American continents, there had been a chain of slave-holders as presidents of USA besides most of the senators, politicians, traders and holders of vast farm lands on the basis of large number of slaves held by them.

Since most of the USA presidents up to 1865 had been the slave holders themselves, therefore, writers like John J. Pool failed to utter a single word against the institution of slavery during that time. It was only during the early 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Mr. Pool could pick up the courage to criticize or to condemn the 3200 years old Jewish and subsequently Christian belief and practice about slavery. To atone for his long support of slavery, he even tried to whitewash the entire wicked record of slavery extending over 400 years throughout the colonies under control of the western nations. As a counter blast against the cursed practice, Mr. Pool also

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<sup>548</sup> Mat 7:1-5 GNB.

contrived to malign the Muslims unnecessarily so that the attention of the world may be diverted from the atrocities of the so-called civilized nations towards the Muslims most of whom were being ruled by the Christian powers. Although it was impossible for him to cover the dark past of Greco-Roman periods and also 400 years' exploitation of the Negroes, the Indians and other weaker nations yet he did his best to substitute Christian inhumanities with the concocted vileness of the Muslim and other nations in the world. It was, therefore, for the restoration of the truth that the present writer had to produce evidence from the western sources about the unspeakable torture and inhuman activities of the western nations especially the colonizers for centuries together. We hope after going through the records produced in the forth coming chapters, the readers will be in a better position to separate Chaff from the Grain. Nothing except truth can bring into lime light the facts to expose the integrity of the missionaries like John J. Pool.

About 36 years before Mr. Pool's book '*Studies in Muhammedanism*', we find in Mr. Thornton Stringfellow (1788-1869) a great defender of slavery through his book titled '*Scriptural and Statistical Views in Favor of Slavery*'. For further studies, the readers may also go through the writings of Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz's (1800-1856), American historian William Gilmore Simms (1856-1870), Thomas Rodrick Dew (1802-1846), the priest Albert Taylor Bledsoe (1809-1877), George Fitzhugh (1806-1881), James Henry Hammond (1807-1864), Bryan Edwards (1743-1800), Josiah Priest (1788-1861) and many others as proponents and defenders of slavery. All of them had been condemning the abolitionists than slavery throughout their lives.

### ***Qur'ān; The Immutable Word of God:***

Being a priest or a missionary, Mr. John J. Pool was duty bound to malign Islam, Qur'ān and the Muslims. He, therefore, did his best to allege that:

The truth, of course, is that the Koran was the work of Mohammed himself, that he derived his material partly from

the Jews, partly from the Christians, partly from the Arabs, and partly from his own thoughts, aspirations, and convictions. It is essentially a very human work.<sup>549</sup>

Pool, however, had no reliable evidence or convincing reason to support his calumny. Should we believe that he was ignorant about the lives, traditions and teachings of the prophets of the Lord sent before Jesus Christ? He, too, knew that all the prophets had been sent by one and the same Lord God of the Universe due to which no one could have preached essentials of faith differing from other prophets of the Lord. Each prophet, therefore, revived and rehearsed the same true unchanging and everlasting teachings of faith. Their source, as such, could be nothing except that had been revealed by the Lord to the earlier prophets which also included certain special instructions about law or guidance to some of the Prophets.

Muhammad (pbAh) being the final prophet promised by the Lord completed the process of revelation from the Almighty. During *Hajjat-ul-Wadah* (The Farewell Hajj), the Almighty certified that:

(...) **This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (...).**<sup>550</sup>

Referring to Abraham, the Almighty had revealed that:

**84.** We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good: **85.** And Zakariya and John, and Jesus and Elias: all in the ranks of the righteous: **86.** And Isma'il and Elisha, and Jonas, and Lot: and to all We gave favour above the nations: **87.** (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and we guided them to a straight way. **88.** This is the guidance of Allah: He giveth that guidance to whom He pleaseth, of His worshippers. If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would be vain for them. **89.** These were the men to whom We gave the Book, and authority, and prophethood: if these (their descendants) reject them, Behold! We shall entrust their

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<sup>549</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammadanism*, p. 11.

<sup>550</sup> Al-Qur'ān 5:3 Yusuf Ali.

charge to a new people who reject them not.<sup>551</sup>

**90.** Those were the (prophets) who received Allah's guidance: Copy the guidance they received; Say: "No reward for this do I ask of you: This is no less than a message for the nations. **91.** No just estimate of Allah do they make when they say: "Nothing doth Allah send down to man (by way of revelation)" Say: "Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought?- a light and guidance to man: But ye make it into (separate) sheets for show, while ye conceal much (of its contents): therein were ye taught that which ye knew not- neither ye nor your fathers." Say: "Allah (sent it down)": Then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling.<sup>552</sup>

We think that the verses of the Qur'ān quoted above are enough to refute the allegations made by people like Mr. John J. Pool. As regards the Qur'ān it has been further revealed that:

**92.** And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings, and confirming (the revelations) which came before it: that thou mayest warn the mother of cities and all around her. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in this (Book), and they are constant in guarding their prayers.<sup>553</sup>

The Lord, therefore, directed the Holy Prophet (pbAh) as quoted below:

Say ye: "We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we bow to Allah (in Islam).<sup>554</sup>

In view of this, we find no sense in Mr. Pool's allegation that Muhammad (pbAh) had derived his material from sources other than the Almighty. He also forgets the challenge of the Qur'ān that in spite of deriving material from all possible sources available to the Jinn and Man, no one can compose a book like the Qur'ān. The challenge is outstanding for more than 1400 years but I

<sup>551</sup> Since the Christians, following St. Paul had rejected the true guidance of the Lord given to Jesus and his predecessors, therefore, the Almighty entrusted the dissemination of his revelations to the Arabs instead of the Jews or the Christians.

<sup>552</sup> Al-Qur'ān 6:86-91 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>553</sup> Al-Qur'ān 6:92 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>554</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:136 Yusuf Ali.

spite of all progress in knowledge and innovations of machines like computers, no one has been able to compose something like the shortest verse in the Qur'ān e.g. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ . How then can it be said that some human being could have compiled the Qur'ān.

Let Mr. Pool also remember that all prophets after Moses including Joshua, Eliah, Elisha, David, John the Baptists and Jesus Christ had been the followers of the law and teachings of Moses. Jesus, therefore, conspicuously declared that:

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>555</sup>

Similarly, Luke recorded that:

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.<sup>556</sup>

Isaiah, too, had said that:

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.<sup>557</sup>

It is worth mentioning here that if rehearsal and revival of the same old material did not disqualify any of the prophets of Israel, how restoration of the same faith and law could bring any discredit for the prophet promised by the Lord foretold by almost all the prophets of the Lord. Jacob clearly spoke about him in Genesis (49:10). Moses, too, had elaborately foretold about him as we find in the following. He said to the Israelites:

9. When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. **10** There shall not be found among you any

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<sup>555</sup> Mat 5:17-19 KJV.

<sup>556</sup> Luk 16:17 KJV.

<sup>557</sup> Isa 40:8 KJV.

one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, **11** Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. **12**. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. **13**. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. **14**. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. **15. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;** **16.** According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. **17.** And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. **18. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.** **19.** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. **20.** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. **21.** And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? **22.** When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it <sup>558</sup>presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

Two things in the message were of utmost importance; 1<sup>st</sup> that the the Lord had promised to send another human prophet like unto Moses. The promised prophet or the comforter (Paraclete) will neither be an enchanter, an observer of times, a witch, a charmer, user of divination nor a consulter with familiar spirits, a wizard, or a necromancer. The likeness of the promised prophet was, therefore, doubly stressed by the Almighty in verses 15 and 18 of Deu 18. Secondly, it was also foretold that the prophet would be "of thy brethren like unto me" (Deu 18:15). The same particularity was again

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<sup>558</sup> Deu 18:9-22 KJV.

stressed by repeating that the God would be raising the said prophet “from among their brethren” and not from the Israelites. This prediction, therefore, makes it amply clear that the promised prophet will be a human being like Moses, which means a man rather than the Holy Spirit as presumed by the Christians. As such, Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) from the Ishmaelites i.e. the true brethren of the Israelites was the fulfillment of all the prophecies made by the Prophets earlier to him. The predictions of Jesus Christ recorded in 14:16-17,25,30, 15:26-27, 16:7-15,), therefore, pertain to no one except Muhammad (pbAh).

Those who arrogantly deny the advent of the Holy Prophet at Makkah (Paran) must also keep in mind another prediction of Moses quoted below:

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.<sup>559</sup>

Jeremiah had also conveyed the message that:

**31.** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. **32.** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **33.** **But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.**<sup>560</sup>

It is evident from the above that the new covenant had been put only in the inward parts of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) and the entire covenant i.e. the Qur'ān or parts of the same had been written on the heart of many of them. Muslims, therefore, had been confirmed as the best of the people of God (Al-Qur'ān 3:110) and they continue to worship Him and Him alone.

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<sup>559</sup> Deu 33:2 KJV.

<sup>560</sup> Jer 31:31-33 KJV.

A prophecy of Isiah also indicates the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the Prophet promised by the Almighty. He said:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying,  
Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.<sup>561</sup>

Everyone knows that the Holy Prophet (pbAh) was an unlettered person who could neither read nor write. Only prophet Muhammad (pbAh), therefore, fulfills the condition of the prophecy. A Hadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) also clarifies the same:

(...) While he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (pbAh) replied, "I do not know how to read. The Prophet (pbAh) added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read (or what shall I read)' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exist) has created man from a clot.' (...)<sup>562</sup>

It is worth noting here that there is no other parallel of the episode throughout the religious history of the world. The prediction of Isaiah, therefore, stood entirely fulfilled in the person of Muhammad as the promised prophet of the Lord. Here is another prophecy of Isaiah which stood fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet (pbAh).

**1.** Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. **2.** He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. **3.** A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. **4.** He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in

<sup>561</sup> Isa 29:12 KJV.

<sup>562</sup> Sahih Al-Bukhari eng tr by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan 6<sup>th</sup> revised Ed. (Lahore: Kazi Publications 1986), Book 1, Hadith No. 3, p. 3.

the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.<sup>563</sup>

It is an established fact that Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) was also known by other names like Ahmad and Mustafa. مصطفی (Mustafa) means the 'elect one'. It was only he who succeeded to create an ideal community consisting of his followers administered with ideal justice, mutual love and universal brotherhood among them. His law prevails throughout the world and he conquered a territory extending to about a million square miles during his life without facing any discouragement to fulfill his mission. No one except him corresponds to the descriptions given in the prophecy quoted above.

Keeping in view the facts recorded above we reiterate that the source of the Qur'ān had been the revelations from no one except the Almighty who dictated the Qur'ān word by word and phrase by phrase to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) so that no corruption or confusion may creep in to the final message of the Lord. The Qur'ān, therefore, revives and rehearses the essence of all the true revelations about faith and law so that there occurs no doubt about veracity of any of the revelations in it. The preservation of the Qur'ān in its pristine purity was given such an importance by the Almighty that he took upon Him to guard it from all corruptions in future. God said:

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).<sup>564</sup>

Since the Word of God cannot fail, therefore, there has been no corruption or change of a dash or dot in the text of the Qur'ān since its revelation till today. This must, therefore, stand as a sign of the truth of Qur'ān for all those who try to find fault with it.

### **No Change Can There Be in the Words of Allah<sup>565</sup>**

As stated earlier each prophet of the Lord from Adam to Moses and Muhammad had been rehearsing the same

<sup>563</sup> Isa 42:1-4 KJV.

<sup>564</sup> Al-Qur'ān 15:9 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>565</sup> Al-Qur'ān 10:64.

essentials of law and faith to their people. According to the Qur'ān, Jesus had clearly proclaimed that:

"(I have come to you), to attest the Law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (Before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me.<sup>566</sup>

As regards Muhammad, the Almighty revealed that:

It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).<sup>567</sup>

Uniformity of the teachings of the Prophets had, therefore, been the basic criterion to differentiate the truth from the falsehood. **Only the imposters differ from the teachings of the prophets of the Old.** Moses had advised his followers to put to death all those who teach the law and faith differing from the preachings of the true prophets of the Lord. The readers may, therefore, consult Ch. 13, 18, 27, 29 and 30 of Deuteronomy for their guidance.

As regards Jesus, he never had the concept of his own divinity or the multiplicity of the Gods. He did not tell anyone to worship him or the Holy Spirit instead of the Almighty. He never advised anyone to bow before the idols or images or even to worship anyone except the Almighty. The diversion started from St. Paul the self-acclaimed apostle of Jesus towards the gentiles who destroyed the strict monotheism of the prophets and the law of the Lord. He and his followers introduced new theology for salvation based on worship of gods other than the Almighty. Jesus Christ, his earliest disciples and the apostles chosen by him always continued to follow the Law of Moses.

**St. Paul and his followers were the first people on earth to denounce all descendants of Adam as born in sin.** They rejected the eternal concept of

<sup>566</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:50 (Yusuf Ali).

<sup>567</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:3 (Yusuf Ali).

atonement through repentance even though the prophets of the Lord like John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had been preaching repentance from sin and obedience to all the commandments of the Lord as the only way towards salvation. Instead of following Jesus Christ and the prophets, the Greco-Roman Christians preferred to follow the attractive **package of St. Paul who was neither a prophet of the Lord nor a true apostle of Jesus Christ.** Consequently, the preachings of St. Paul superseded all the commandments of the Lord, and the true preachings of John the Baptist<sup>568</sup> and Jesus Christ.<sup>569</sup> His concept of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as God son of God and a martyr for expiation of the sin of mankind abrogated the teachings of all prophets from Adam to Jesus Christ.

#### ▪ ***Torments of Hell***

It was an extreme arrogance on the part of Mr. Pool to state that: "*The doctrines of the Qur'ān with regards to the torments of hell are devilish*".<sup>570</sup> The exceedingly authoritative tone of Mr. Pool speaks of his direct link with the devil who alone might have divulged the afore-stated secret to him. The observation of Mr. Pool, therefore, needs no further comments.

Ignoring the distant past for the moment, we shall be highlighting different facts pertaining to slave trade and treatment of Negros at the hands of the Western Christianity who had been guilty of deporting and enslaving tens of millions of the black Africans especially with effect from the discovery of the American continents and prolonging up to the year 1937. Slavery was at its peak in the Americas about 40 years before

<sup>568</sup> Mat 3:2. People, therefore, confessed (repented) their sins and were baptized by John as a token of their repentance and initiation towards rectitude. According to Mark: "*John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*". (Mark 1:4 KJV)

<sup>569</sup> Jesus said: "*Repent: for the Kingdom of God is at hand*". (Mat 4:17 KJV). Jesus also replied to Satan: "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*." (Mat 4:10 KJV). Hence, Christ did not teach anyone to worship or serve him instead of God.

<sup>570</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammadanism*, p. 210.

the publication of Mr. Pool's book mentioned earlier. The tragic, torturous and inhuman treatment of Negroes at the hands of the white American settlers had no match in the world except the treatment of the Romans with the slaves from about 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. to the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. We, therefore, wonder at the oblivion of Mr. Pool about the woeful conditions of the slaves in the American continents, islands and South American states for about 250 years prior to USA Proclamation of Emancipation in about 1863. Mr. Pool too could not have been unaware of the inhuman treatment of slaves by the white Christendom occurring in the colonies even during his youth. His missionary duties, however, did not allow him to describe the misdeeds of the Christian nations. He said:

**Amongst Moslems this dreadful institution has existed from time immemorial**, and has the sanction of their Sacred Scriptures, the Koran. When Mohammed became the Prophet, Priest, and King of Islam, slavery existed amongst the Arabians, and though he had, at any rate at first, little sympathy with the custom, he forbore to denounce it, and only sought to some extent to mitigate its evils. Here and there in the Koran references are made to slavery, and it is stated that captives taken in war are the lawful property of those who capture them — property that may be either kept, given away, or sold.

The eagerness to accuse Islam had perhaps deprived Mr. Pool of his senses and especially the sense of time. Although Muslims and their sacred scriptures did not exist prior to 610 A.D. yet Mr. Pool discovered existence of the dreadful institution of slavery in Islam from the time immemorial. Factually, Bible had authentic reference about slavery since 2000 years before the revelation of the Qur'ān yet Mr. Pool alleged its sanction in the Islamic scriptures without supporting his argument with any quotation from the Islamic scriptures.

#### ▪ ***Falsehood Cannot Prevail Over Truth***

Facts of history cannot be obliterated merely by misguiding words of writers like Mr. Pool. No one can

conceal the truth that the Bible had accorded full sanction to slavery declaring slaves as property of their masters forever. Our chapters titled *Bible Authenticates and Perpetuates Slavery'* and '*Slavery and Christianity'* have, therefore, quoted elaborate references from the Bible to prove our contention.

As against the Bible, ***Qur'ān is the only book of revealed religions which repeatedly emphasized emancipation as one of the important ways towards salvation.*** It also strongly prohibited enslaving the free people Either through kidnapping, debt slavery, punishment for crimes or any other way except the captives of war who too could not become the permanent property of the possessors. No doubt the Arabs of the ignorance period have been holding slaves as a legacy of the distant past without any scriptural authority as claimed by the Jews or the Christians yet Islam instead of approving the practice always preached that the Muslims must manumit the slaves either to expiate their sins or to earn pleasure of the Lord by doing the virtuous deed. Knowing all this, Mr. Pool continued to find fault with the Muslims. He said:

Thus the legality of the possession of slaves by Moslems is placed beyond all doubt, and the abolition of slavery in Mohammedan countries is made an almost impossible task, because to do so would be to abrogate a large part of the teaching of the Perspicuous Book. As a matter of fact, no Moslem state has ever voluntarily abolished slavery, and probably never will.<sup>571</sup>

We can hardly, decide whether Mr. Pool was more ignorant or more perverse to say that "abolition of slavery in Mohammedan countries is made an almost impossible task because to do so would be to abrogate a large part of the teachings of the Perspicuous Book". In spite of his slanderous observation he could not mention even a single verse from the Qur'ān which had to be abrogated to manumit the slaves. **Pool, therefore, resorted to utter falsehood in this respect.** Factually, Muslims had always been anxious to manumit the slaves on one occasion or the other. **Muslims,**

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<sup>571</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 385-386.

**therefore, never had a slave based economy like the Greeks, the Spartans, the Romans or the Christian colonizers in the world.** As against the Christians, we find no practice among the Muslims to treat slaves like animals. Instead of any inhuman treatment with them, the Muslims normally used slaves for household or routine jobs while **some of them also joined armies of their own volition.**

#### **Gradual Manumission of Slaves:**

No doubt that instead of forbidding slavery abruptly, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) stressed more and more on universal brotherhood of man and equality of human rights. Establishment of universal brotherhood and numerous reforms introduced by Islam compelled the Muslims to adopt a gradual process to eliminate slavery. Any drastic step to proscribe slavery would have caused a disruption in the existing system and structure of the society. Besides this, no benefit could be derived from one-sided elimination of slavery while all other nations in the world were tenaciously clinging to the institution. Muslim captives of war would have suffered from great disadvantage unless other nations were also prepared to reciprocate the good gesture of Islam to free the captives. Syed Amir Ali wisely said that:

It has been justly contended that, as the promulgation of the laws, precepts, and teachings of Islam extended over twenty years, it is naturally to be expected many of the pre-Islamite institutions, which were eventually abolished, were, at first, either tacitly permitted or expressly recognised. In one of these categories stood the usage of slavery. The evil was intertwined with the inmost relations of the people among whom Mohammed flourished. Its extinction was only to be achieved by the continued agency of wise and humane laws, and not by the sudden and entire emancipation of the existing slaves, which was morally and economically impossible. Numberless provisions, negative as well as positive, were accordingly introduced in order to promote and accomplish a gradual enfranchisement. A contrary policy would have

produced an utter collapse of the infant commonwealth.<sup>572</sup>

Let us remember that the Holy Prophet (pbAh) had introduced his reforms between 610 and 632 AD. Taking in view the circumstances throughout the world, he abolished all types of slavery except the captives of war or people born into slavery. It would have been much before time to abolish these types of slavery during the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Mankind, therefore, took more than 1250 years after the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century to abolish the crude form of slavery. There had been a long standing turmoil even in USA and in the South American states struggling for freedom and equality of human rights during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was during 1858 that Lincoln was debating with Douglas about slavery:

Lincoln insisted that slavery contradicted what he understood to be the fundamental truths of American identity, particularly the natural-rights claims of the Declaration: “**If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.**” **Lincoln acknowledged the difficulty of ending slavery in a day, a week, or a year.** Slavery, he said, was like a gruesome metastatic cancer growing on a man’s neck. “He dares not cut it out. He bleeds to death if he does, directly.” Slavery, he said, was also like a rattlesnake that crawled into “a bed where the children are sleeping. Would I do right to strike him there? I might hurt the children.” Or the awakened serpent “might bite the children.” But leave it coiled in the bed, let the cancer grow, and the result was also death. Permit expansion, and, as the past seventy years had shown, you deepen American slavery’s severity, entrench more securely its “immense pecuniary interest.”

**For the Union, Lincoln insisted, cannot “endure permanently half slave and half free. . . . It will become all one thing or the other.”** (...) At the Ottawa, Illinois, debate, Lincoln asked: “What is necessary for the nationalization of slavery? It is simply the next Dred Scott decision. It is merely for the Supreme Court to decide that no State under the Constitution can exclude it, just as they have already decided that under the Constitution neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature can do it.”<sup>573</sup>

The actual history of the world has, therefore, attested the wisdom of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) not to abolish all

<sup>572</sup> Syed Amir Ali, *The Spirit of Islam*, (Calcutta: S. K. Lahiri & Co. 1902) p. 221.

<sup>573</sup> Baptist, *The Half has Never Been Told*, p. 381-382.

forms of slavery with immediate effect. **The Prophet (pbAh), however, introduced such reforms that banned other forms of slavery except captives of war or home-born slaves with numerous exhortations to free them as one of the most virtuous deeds to please the Lord.** Such measures, therefore, prevented any expansion of slavery among the Muslim community. Masters were enjoined to treat these slaves as their own brethren and to take care of them as members of their own family. As such, in spite of the fact that slavery existed only in name, it had no malignant aspect in the Muslim society whereas the slaves had been leading extremely miserable lives among the non-believers up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To comprehend the system adopted by Islam, the readers may go through the chapter on '*Social Reforms for the Welfare and Emancipation of the Slaves*'.

After a lot of bitter criticism of Islam, **Mr. Pool had to admit that the Muslims had been treating the slaves in a kind manner.** It is, however, astonishing to note that no good conduct of Muslims could pacify Mr. Pool. He says:

Not content with urging the Faithful to treat their slaves well, and in some cases to marry them, Mohammed even declared that it was a meritorious act to free slaves, and that those who did so would bring down upon themselves the blessing of Allah. In the 90th sura of the Koran it is written: "What shall make them to understand what the highway of good is? It is to free captives, or to feed in the day of famine the orphan who is of kin, or the poor man who lieth on the ground. Whoso doeth this, and is one of those who believe, and recommend perseverance unto each other, and recommend mercy unto each other, these shall be companions of the right hand." Then in the 24<sup>th</sup> sura the words occur: "Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one, if ye know good in them<sup>574</sup>, and give them of the riches of God,

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<sup>574</sup> Good in them, therefore, implies the capability as well as firm resolve of the slaves to earn enough amount to pay for their manumission.

which He hath given you." Doubtless these gracious words and rules of conduct of Mohammed with regard to the treatment of slaves have had some weight with devout Moslems; and if all owners of slaves only lived up to such exhortations slavery would not be the dreadful curse it is.<sup>575</sup>

Mr. Pool seemed to be an expert to present perverted picture of facts. He, therefore, continues to malign the Muslims in the following:

I will not linger over the horrors endured by the captives in the slave dhows as they are being transported along the Eastern coast of Africa, nor over the degradation and sufferings in the slave markets. **Probably the happiest part of a slave's life is- in the homes of the people of Islam;** but from the beginning to the end the whole traffic is an abomination, and the conscience of the civilized world is beginning to be touched by the sad tale of Africa's woes; and the nations of Christendom are arousing themselves to battle with this great evil.<sup>576</sup>

In any case, it was good of Mr. Pool to realize in about 1892 AD that slavery or slave trade was an abomination. This reminds us of a famous verse of Ghalib (1797-1869).

ہانے اس زو دلچیاں کا پیشان ہونا

The realization though 85 years later than UK Parliament Bill 1807 abolishing slave trade and about 29 years after US Proclamation of Emancipation of 1865 was quite a positive improvement in Mr. Pool as a Christian missionary.

As regards the conscience of the civilized world, we fail to know implication of the same. If civilization implies subjugating the backward and weaker nations with the most developed arms, keeping them under their heels through political and financial supremacy, controlling the space, having built great mansions, means of communications and development of the mass destructive devices in the world then the western nations are at the zenith of the civilization. This is what they tried to propagate through world-wide media under

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<sup>575</sup> John J. Pool, p. 387-388.

<sup>576</sup> John J. Pool, p. 391.

their control. Alternatively, judging from the perspective of humanness and rights of human kind, the western Christian nations will be at the abyss of the civilization. In spite of all this, Mr. Pool opines that:

The feeling is becoming more general and intense that if Mohammedans will not root out the trade from the inside by abolishing the demand, **Christians must stop it from the outside by cutting off the supply.** Already in Egypt for a few years, and latterly in Zanzibar, the action of the English has been felt, and slavery has been partially crippled. Sir Evelyn Baring, in a recent report to the English Government on Slavery in Egypt, states that in 1885 there were thirty-two slave dealers in Cairo, but the Khedive was urged to take vigorous measures against them, and now not a single slave dealer is to be found. A very few slaves, it is said, may be occasionally smuggled into the country, and sold privately, but for all practical purposes the slave trade in Egypt is extinct.<sup>577</sup>

Thank God once again for Mr. Pool's frank admission **that supply of slaves was in the Christian hands who could have curtailed it at their will.** Paying no attention to such inconsistencies in his arguments, Mr. Pool did not forget his mission to attack the Holy Prophet (pbAh) with false accusations such as we find in the following:

The mistake the Prophet made, however, was to sanction slavery at all! It is a custom that it is almost impossible to regulate. The true cure for the evils of slavery is to abolish the sinful practice altogether.<sup>578</sup>

To say such words is just a blasphemy. Where did he find the Prophet (pbAh) sanctioning the slavery? Who before him had closed the door towards slavery which was reopened by the messenger of Allah (pbAh)? Pool had nothing to support his allegations. He also had forgotten the injunctions about slavery in the Old Testament and the preachings of Jesus Christ, St. Peter, St. Paul and hundreds of **Christian fathers advising slaves to serve their human masters as if they were serving the Christ.** It's a pity that we find none of the celebrities among the Christians advising the civil

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<sup>577</sup> John J. Pool, p. 391.

<sup>578</sup> John J. Pool, p. 388.

authorities or the human masters to treat with the slaves in the manner they treated their own kith and kin. As such, the mistake attributed to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) was nothing but a product of malice on the part of John J. Pool.

### ▪ ***Indignation of Europe***

Mr. Pool's quotation from *Times of India* in Bombay News Paper of 1890 was another vain attempt to sling mud on the Muslims. He said:

"Up to the beginning of the present century all captives of war taken from Christian nations were enslaved by the Turks, and a Turkish campaign in Hungary or Poland was little more than a gigantic slave raid. Less than 200 years ago 100,000 German and Magyar women and girls were carried off in a single campaign. And even when the decay of the Ottoman military power prevented the Turks from invading Christian countries any more, they still continued raiding and kidnapping. But the supply of captive women became less and less, and the markets of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were closed by the indignation of Europe in 1816.<sup>579</sup>

Why didn't Mr. Pool quote from some historical book to uphold abduction of 100,000 German and Magyar women and girls? The accusation, therefore, loses its credibility.

Mr. Pool, perhaps, had the missionary assignment to slander Islam by one way or the other. In spite of the fact that he had no facts or figures to support any of his accusations against Islam or Muslims yet he did not stop his attack on them. He says:

The closing of all the other avenues by which women were formerly obtained to replace the drain caused by polygamy has intensified and aggravated the East African slave trade.<sup>580</sup>

Mr. Pool failed to disclose the other avenues to replace the supposed drain caused by polygamy. Where are the statistics to prove that Muslims had been more polygamous than Hindus, Jews, Heathens, African Tribes or the Red Indians etc? Even if polygamy among the Muslims had caused drain of women as alleged by Mr.

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<sup>579</sup> John J. Pool, p. 388.

<sup>580</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Mohammedanism*, p. 388-89.

Pool, how could Muslim intensify or aggravate the east African slave trade at the time when almost all east-African countries had been colonized by the western Christian nations. Starting from 1500 AD, they had converted such large numbers of African people to Christianity that these states were known as Christian colonies. Does Mr. Pool mean that the Arabs were given free hand by the Christian rulers to hunt and enslave Christians or even the Arabs from their colonies to be taken away anywhere they wished?

Although Mr. Pool had been brain washed in such a manner that he could see nothing immoral or reprehensible in the Christians yet there had been certain people of integrity in Europe seeing things in their true colors. As retard to his praise for the European high standard of morality, we quote a passage from Mr. Robert Briffault for the benefit of the readers. He writes:

Mankind has been uplifted out of a past weltering with cruelty and, injustice, a past in which four-fifths of the population of Europe endured under the heels of their tormentors such treatment as would to-day raise a storm of indignation were it inflicted on dogs; when men in thousands were legally flayed, impaled, quartered,, roasted, boiled; when London was called 'the city of gibbets'; when none but tyrannous princes and priests had human rights; when the producers of food were made to pay for the right to use their implements; when the infamy of nameless injustice was imperturbably sanctified by law, acquiesced in by literature, upheld by religion; when no murmur could be uttered against it save at the price of martyrdom. Yet no elaboration of professed morality has had anything to do with the triumph of justice which has swept away that hideous nightmare. No great new ethical principle has been discovered or proclaimed between the age of the Tudors and that of Victoria.<sup>581</sup>

Mr. Pool also observed that:

The dreadful cruelties practised by the Arab slave dealers in Africa cry out to Heaven for punishment.<sup>582</sup> That grand

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<sup>581</sup> Robert Briffault, *Making of Humanity*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1919), p. 294.

<sup>582</sup> This statement contains nothing except an ill-will of a Christian missionary against Islam. How could the so-called Arab slave

Christian missionary, Dr. Livingstone, was one of the first to call public attention to the evil. Wherever he went in his travels he found sad traces of the trade, which he held to be the sum and substance of all villainy. And missionaries and travellers of the present day tell the same tale. The slave-hunts are organized in three regions: in the interior of Africa, on the borders of the Upper Nile, and on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Arabs and Turks are at the head of such expeditions. The plan of operations is usually to surround a village, and as the inhabitants at the first sound of alarm rush out, with or without their spears in their hands, the traders shoot them down as fast as they can. In a few minutes the struggle is over, and the men being killed the women and children are gathered into a group. A dreadful' scene then ensues. The older women are seized and brutally murdered on the spot,<sup>583</sup> while the younger women and children are tied together with ropes, some having in addition a pole, forked at the end, fastened round their necks, and then they are driven away on their journey to the coast.<sup>584</sup>

Mr. Pool's remarks that *the dreadful cruelties practiced by the Arab slave dealers in Africa cry out to Heaven for punishment'* also show his bias against Islam. We firmly believe that instead of following the wishes of Mr. John J. Pool, **the Almighty will be deciding punishments on merit in case of all the individuals as well as the communities.** There, as such, is no likelihood that the Lord God may allow exemption to all the unspeakable cruelties of the western nations and slave holders in the American as well as Australian continents nor is there any possibility of transferring the guilt of the Christians to the Muslims or other nations. There as such, can be no likelihood that the Lord God of the Universe may punish Mohammedans or other nations for the wrongs done by the Christians simply because '*God will reward every person according to what he has done'* (Rom 2:8

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traders get into the Christian majority states ruled by the western nations to commit dreadful cruelties there? Mr. Pool had nothing to explain. For true position, please refer to our chapters on '*Slavery, the Backbone of New World Economy*', and '*Cruelties towards Slaves and Indigenous People*'.

<sup>583</sup> Mr. Livingston falsely attributes such cruelties to the Muslims including the Turks. Never in the world did the Muslims forget their accountability before the Lord. Why should they choose hell instead of heaven promised to them against faith in the Almighty and kind as well as affectionate treatment with His creatures.

<sup>584</sup> John J. Pool, p. 389.

GNB). As such, Mr. Pool's coverage of genocide of hundreds of millions of indigenous people besides causing deaths to a similar number of slaves by subjecting them to severe torture, overwork and inhuman treatment in the colonies won't absolve the criminals without reprisal from the Lord. Even the so-called saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ will be of no avail to such people perpetrating inhuman cruelties on the Negroes and other people enslaved by them.

The report attributed to Mr. Livingstone must be taken as a missionary's work lacking truth as well as integrity of the writer. Mr. Livingstone was born in Scotland in 1813 was a Protestant missionary who claimed himself as a great explorer and anti-slavery crusader. He died in 1873 and was declared posthumous national hero of Britain in 1874. He advocated evangelization, highway into the interior of Africa, commerce and colonial expansion. His motto was Christianity, Commerce and Civilization. As such, being a grand Christian missionary, he was bound to paint a perverted picture of Muslim culture to promote his own cause.

Initially, Mr. Livingstone focused on South Africa but later on he devoted most of his time with his wife in Mozambique where the latter was buried in Chupanga (Wikipedia, s.v. Mozambique). Mozambique had become a Portuguese colony since 1505 and received independence from them as a socialist republic in 1975 ('Mozambique', Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 1996). According to Wikipedia Mozambique had 56% Christians, 18% Muslims, and the rest comprising of animists and others in 2007. In view of the above, Mr. Livingstone's accusation against the Muslim Arab enslavers doing a vast business in the Portuguese Christian country around year 1892 can be taken nothing except a distortion of facts.

According to some members of his expedition (1858-1864), he (Livingstone) was secretive, self-righteous, moody and could not tolerate criticism. Physician John Cruk, writing in 1862 said: I can come to no other

conclusion that Dr. Livingstone is out of his mind and most unsafe leader (Wikipedia). The same also transpires from his self-conflicting stand on abolition or antislavery crusader contrasting with his advocacy of commercial and colonial expansion. Keeping in view the above, Mr. Living Stone's reports if any might have been reflective of his missionary zeal than reliable reports of facts indicating Muslim Arab involvement in the East African slave hunts and trade in a Christian colony governed by the Portuguese. Mozambique had nothing special to differ from the normal trend of the European slave traders involved in transatlantic trade towards Europe, American continents or some other destinations in pursuit of maximum revenue against the sale of slaves.

Mr. Pool further writes that:

It is calculated that 90,000 human beings are carried off every year in Africa, and sold into slavery. And this figure represents but a small section of the evils done by slavery and the slave trade, for it is computed that for one slave that arrives at the slave market ten are slain in the first attack on the village, or die by the way. **Thus we reach the awful total of 900,000 souls that are the victims yearly of this infamous traffic in human beings**, and all to gratify the selfish and sensual passions of the followers of the Prophet of Islam. **Verily Mohammedans have much to answer for to God in this matter of slavery and the slave trade.**<sup>585</sup>

Now something about Mr. Pool's observation that: *verily Mohammedans have much to answer for to God in this matter of slavery and the slave trade*. Mr. Poole perhaps is obsessed with the conviction that the Christians enjoy immunity from accountability before the Lord for the evils done by them. They wishfully think that Christ has taken on him the burden of all the inequities of the Christians of past, present and future. Alternately, the Lord may punish the Muslims for the guilt of the Christians. If so let them wait for the Day of Judgment.

Although Mr. Pool had been concentrating on blaming Muslim for the slave trade on the eastern coast of Africa yet he had been shy to disclose as to which nations had

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<sup>585</sup> John J. Pool, p. 390-391.

colonized or enslaved free nations of Africa. It is, therefore, an enigma to understand in what circumstances, the nations under the European Christians could have given a free hand to Muslim Arabs to exploit human resources from the countries ruled by them.

Mr. Pool also referred to anti-slavery conference held in Brussels in 1890 which was signed by seventeen powers. He says:

Turkey has signed it, and yet Turkey is very greatly the cause of the dreadful traffic. It is futile for the Sultan, who styles himself the Commander of the Faithful, to issue tirades against the slave trade so long as he keeps one thousand women and girls in his seraglio, guarded by eunuchs and governed by the rod.<sup>586</sup>

The spiteful remark that the Ottoman sultan had 1000 women and girls in his seraglio is far from truth. To know the facts, the readers may go through the book *Private and Royal Life in The Ottoman Palace*' by İlber Ortaylı (Bluedome Press, Istanbul, 2014 title '*The Pavements of the Maid Servants and the Sultan's Wives*'). Referring to the dormitory of the maid servants on page 128, the writer records that:

The entresols supported by marble pillars were later connected with wooden partitions to make more space. The dormitory was built with a capacity to allow 20-25 maidservants to stay on each floor. **The dormitory can take around 60-70 maidservants in total.** There is no passage from one floor to another from inside. One could enter the entresols only through the Apartments of the Kalfas<sup>587</sup>. This planning is interesting in that it gives us an idea about the education and discipline in the Harem.

Mr. Pool, perhaps, had no chance to visit the *Topcapi* palace himself. This was the reason for his dependence on imagination than on reported facts. Had he visited the palace or studied about the layout or use of different parts of the same, he would not have imagined 1000

<sup>586</sup> John J. Pool, p. 393.

<sup>587</sup> A general term in the Ottoman Empire used for supervisors in service in the palace.

women and girls in seraglio. The animosity of Europe against the ottoman caliphs is not unknown to the world. **The Ottomans had been effectively ruling territories spreading over three continents covering about twenty million sq km<sup>588</sup> which had been almost twice the total territories falling in the European continent spreading over 10.18 million km<sup>2</sup> including Iceland, Nova Zembla archipelago, Svalbard and Jan Mayen etc.** While there had been scores of states and governments in Europe, the ottomans sultanate was being controlled only from one centre i.e. *Topcapi* palace at Istanbul. Keeping in view the extent of their sultanate, and the work involved in the administration of peace and justice throughout the regions, the ottoman caliphs had been extremely economical in employment of men as well as women in the palace and all the offices attached to it.

*Topcapi* Palace had not only been the official residence of the sultans but also it served as state office, guesthouse and the reception office for delegates from the world. It, therefore, had spacious gardens in between a large number of kitchens and the guest rooms. The palace had also been the venue of all the official ceremonies of the state. It housed the schools for princes, the hospital, the Janissari training camp, gardens, the official chambers of the ladies in the Harem, the treasury and the apartments of the treasurers, the mosques, the imperial hall, the audience hall, quarters for cevri kalfa, guard station, Iftariye Bower and the sultan's stable for disguise etc. The Palace also had a school for girls including the princesses and other girls from whom the Sultan chose his wife or wives. Others were married to the princes, the pashas or certain governors in the sultanate. '*Girls from different nations were taken to the harem including Croats, Greeks, Russians, Ukrainians and Georgians. There were*

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<sup>588</sup> *The Ottoman Sultans* by Salih Gulen, Istanbul, 2009, Preface, p. ix.  
May be Mr. Gulhen had included the Muslim world acknowledging the caliphate of the Turks though ruled or governed by others. As compared to this, the Wikipedia reports area not extending beyond 5.2 million sq kms under the direct Ottoman rule in about 1683 AD.

*also French and Italian girls.*<sup>589</sup> Here is an interesting report from page 80 of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World*:

Although the imperial palace had a monopoly on this unorthodox method of enslavement, other Ottoman officials, imitating the sultan's household, maintained a parallel recruitment pattern of slaves from abroad, and an elaborate hierarchy of slaves: trained kul and other mamlüks, concubines, eunuchs (khādim, khaṣī), and valets of all kinds. From the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century slaves rose to the most prominent positions in the state. From this time onward, even free Muslims of old families who wished to enter high-level positions would sometimes request to become "slaves of the pādishāh."<sup>590</sup>

Such was the condition of slave women or girls in the harem that Sultans after 1600 used to choose their wives from ladies educated and trained in the Harem. Conspicuous among them had been Roxane from Ukraine commonly known as Huram Sultan the beloved wife of Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent. The harem, therefore, had always been a sanctuary besides an educational centre for women free from the usual vices or promiscuity as reported about many of the western palaces in the history.

#### ▪ **Women in the Seraglio**

A substantial part of Sultan's Harem consisted of the Mother Queen, the queen or the queens of the Ruling Sultan, their sisters, children, other relatives and their attendants. It is an admitted fact that Muslims made no discrimination among the human beings just on the basis of their slavery in the past or the present. Instead of humiliation of the slave girls, the sultan's Harem had the arrangement to upgrade them, to teach the etiquettes and to educate them about the religious knowledge and certain basic sciences necessary to illuminate their minds to cope with the future

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<sup>589</sup> İlber Ortaylı, 'Private and Royal Life in The Ottoman Palace' (Blue Dome Press, 535 Fifth Avenue, New York 2014), p. 109-110.

<sup>590</sup> John L. Esposito, V. 4, Slavery, p. 80.

responsibilities as worthy Queens or venerable partners of the pashas and governors of the most powerful and extensive empire in the world. It had, therefore, been such a gathering of chaste and polished women that the sultans after 1600 AD usually chose their wives or wife from the girls trained in the Harem. This singular act of sultans not only restored but raised the social status and prestige of women who had either been gifted to the Sultans by the Christian rulers or presented to serve at Harem by the provincial governors/ army commanders in the empire. The harem never had any sex slaves nor had there been the possibility of retaining any unchaste women there. The Harem was free from any promiscuity whatsoever. **There had been no reports about any illegitimate children of the sultans or male members of their family.** In spite of its critical approach against Islam, a report in the Brill's Encyclopedia certifies excellent treatment with the girls or women abiding in the Harem:

The sultan's *harim* numbered several hundred, classified in a strict hierarchy of five ranks, only the two highest of which (those of *kadtn*, "lady" and, below them, of *gedikli*, "privileged"), were attached to the person of the sovereign. Some of the women of the highest rank were former slaves whom the sultan had freed and subsequently married informally. Although for many years none of the sultan's wives had been freeborn, these former slaves had no difficulty in wielding very great influence at court.<sup>591</sup>

In his foreword to the book '*The Ottoman Sultans*', Mr. Osman Osmanoglu writes that:

A comparison of the Ottoman imperial palaces with their European and Asian counterparts makes it solidly clear that the Ottoman sultans lived their lives far more modestly. Even so, they cracked the mystery of **ruling from their smaller Imperial Council Chamber (the Kubbealtı)** over a much larger track of territory that stretched millions of square miles. And in fact, no greater peace has ever prevailed in the lands of the vast transcontinental Empire stretching from Balkans to the Caucasus and from the Sahara to the Middle East. Those studying today's unrest in these lands should look further into the Ottoman's peaceful governing of the territories for

<sup>591</sup> Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 35.

centuries.<sup>592</sup>

### **The Versailles Palace:**

The critics of the Ottoman sultans must not, therefore, imagine the life in Topcapi palace in the likeness of the European palaces and especially the Versailles palace of France prior to the French revolution of 1789. None among the Sultans had lax morals like Luis XVI (1774-1791) nor had there been any queen of the ottoman sultans so infamous, immoral or extravagant as Marie Antoinette (1755-1793) wife of King Luis XVI who was also known as '**Madame Deficit**'. Many of French people held her responsible for extremely lavish expenses at the palace draining out most of the financial resources of France leading to thousands of other vices in the empire.<sup>593</sup> As compared to the grand palace at Versailles, the Topcapi palace or even the subsequent palace i.e. the Dolmabachi at Istanbul were neither as extensive nor expensive or overcrowded by the women or men employed there just for different types of royal entertainments or to fulfill other whimsical desires of the king and the queen. A brief description of the palace can be found in the following excerpts from '*World History, Perspective on the Past*':

Everything about the Versailles palace was immense. It faced a huge royal court dominated by a statue of Louis XIV. The palace itself stretched for a distance of about 700 yards. It was so long that food from the kitchens was often cold by the time servants reached Louis's chambers.

Because of its great size, Versailles was like a small royal city. The palace contained a chapel, thereafter, library, and numerous council chambers where the king's ministers met to discuss state business. In addition, **about 1,000 nobles and their 4,000 servants crowded into the palace's 226 rooms. Another 5,000 servants were housed in nearby annexes.**<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>592</sup> Ilber Ortayli, p. viii.

<sup>593</sup> For details, please consult wikipedia 'Marie Antoinette' and 'King Luis XVI' & 'Palace of Versailles'. Also at biography.com and history.com etc.

<sup>594</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, *World History, Perspectives on the Past* p. 443.

Although the king's bedchamber was impressive, the palace's most famous room was the Hall of Mirrors. **This remarkable room was 246 feet long and 33 feet wide.** Seventeen towering windows gave guests a splendid view of the palace gardens. Light from these windows flooded the room and reflected the gardens in 17 huge goldframed mirrors on the opposite wall. So much solid silver furniture filled the red marble hall that it formed part of France's monetary reserves.<sup>595</sup>

Outside the Hall of Mirrors stretched Versailles' beautiful formal **gardens covering almost 250 acres.** There paths, flowers, and shrubs were arranged in precise geometric patterns. **Four hundred gardeners** made sure that every plant was carefully clipped.<sup>596</sup>

Although France itself was prosperous, the French government faced a grave financial crisis. A significant portion of the debt came from the cost of maintaining the royal family at Versailles. For example, **Marie Antoinette spent 100,000 livres** a year on clothing at a time when 50,000 livres would support a lavish lifestyle, and the average peasant earned 500 to 700 livres a year. **By 1789, the government used 50 percent of its budget to pay interest on its debt and 13 percent to support the royal family's household staff of 15,000 people.**<sup>597</sup>

About the same period, it has been recorded that:

The poor people of France's cities often went hungry. Most of Paris's poor people ate three pounds of bread a day and very little else. If the cost of bread rose, hungry mobs attacked carts of grain and bread to steal what they needed.<sup>598</sup>

As compared to this, the condition had been much different in the Ottoman Empire. Most of the Sultans had a modest living style and they took great pains to promote prosperity and welfare of the masses. They had been strict observers of Islamic precepts and used to offer mandatory prayers five times a day. Due to the fear of Lord, they refrained from showing any moral laxity whatsoever. In view of all this, Mr. John J. Pool's remarks about '1000 slave women in the Seraglio' are obviously incorrect. Instead of any historical evidence,

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<sup>595</sup> Ibid p. 444.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid, p. 482c.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid, p. 484.

such remarks are based merely on personal bias of Mr. Pool against Islam.

The visitor to Versailles and Topcapi can easily discern the difference. While the former has the air of aggrandizement, extravagance and expensiveness, the latter has the atmosphere of a sanctuary or a place of worship where each and every wall of the building is adorned with the commandments of the Almighty or certain Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). People living there being constantly reminded of the duties and the etiquettes enjoined by the Lord and the Holy Prophet (pbAh) must be reflecting better characteristics than occupants of the European palaces like Versailles. Keeping in view all this, we cannot agree with the European writers imagination of illegitimate love affairs or promiscuity in the Ottoman seraglio as had been a routine in the European palaces during 10<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **The Longest Ruling Dynasty in the World:**

European writers usually ignore the fact that there never had been any male line dynasty in the world who continued to rule over the lands extending over three continents for a continuous period of 613 years during which 36 Sultans had been almost direct descendants or brethren of each other. They had been the super most world power during their hey day. No sluggish, lethargic or morally lax rulers could have survived for such a long time to rule over vast territories in the world. Majority of the Turk sultans had been among the most disciplined and rightly guided rulers as compared to their competitors in the world. They always continued to make their best efforts to impose the law of the Lord throughout their empire and had such 'tremendous responsibilities that impacted the entire world of that time'. **Due to overwork, therefore, the sultans visited the harem quite late in the evening while very often they used to sleep on a bench reserved for that purpose within the office.** Instead of sitting on traditional thrones like other kings or emperors in the

world, the Sultans used to sit on a bench in a carpeted room without furniture. They did not display any pomp or show like other rulers of the East or West.

Most of the sultans had been strong people of wisdom with unique talents for administration and warfare.

It is reported that Murad IV was a tremendously strong man, and he joined in some of the sports events here. It is narrated on the epigraph behind the marble throne that, while on horseback at full gallop, Murad IV succeeded in hurling his oak club 115 *ziras* (nearly 80 meters) in February 1637. The stated distance is even longer than the distance between the two goals of a soccer pitch. This gives us a good idea of how strong the sultan was.<sup>599</sup>

The mischievous suggestion that the Seraglio housed 1000 women and girls is not maintainable simply because the Harem consisted of a comparatively small part of the total palace area divided in different apartments of the ladies or servant quarters with the capacity only to house about 100 or more women of all categories at the most. Ilber Ortayli has, therefore, remarked that:

No matter what tales are told about the Harem, the reality was not so sensational. Unfortunately, some people wish to put their erotic fantasies in a written form and choose the Harem as their setting. The entertainments and love affairs of European palaces have no counterpart in the Ottoman Harem. Those who make up the Harem stories show little understanding of the talented and intelligent women educated at the Harem or their high cultural level.<sup>600</sup>

No doubt many sultans had been polygamous, yet there never had been a report that they ever resorted to unlawful sex. It was not, therefore, due to some specific defects in the Turkish way of government, extravagance, injustice or mismanagement that the Ottoman Empire/caliphate had to see their end times. Nothing in the world can endure forever. All dynasties in the world had been suffering from the natural process of continuous decline and decay. Although the same rule also applied on the Ottomans yet the main cause of their downfall had also been the collective animosity and conspiracies

<sup>599</sup> Ilber Ortayli, p. 102.

<sup>600</sup> Ilber Ortayli, p. 111.

of the Christian powers around them. The critics like John J. Pool, therefore, have no justification to accuse the Turk Sultans for extravagance or voluptuousness.

Mr. Poole continues to take his vengeance against Islam and the Turks in the following:

If only Turkey and other Mohammedan nations could see the evil of their ways in keeping slaves at all, even domestic slaves, then the doom of the slave trade would, indeed, be struck, and Africa would be saved. The prospect is not hopeful from the Moslem side; **so we can but look to the vigilance of the Christian Powers to check, diminish, and cut off the supply.**<sup>601</sup>

It was about three decades after the Emancipation Declaration of USA 1863-1865 that writers like Mr. Pool had the courage to condemn slavery as a curse. In his anxiety to wash away the 3200 years old tradition and practice of the Jews and Christians to enslave people from all parts of the world, Mr. Pool earnestly tried to transfer entire guilt of slavery from the Christian West and the colonizers to the Muslim states in about 1892. He, however, did not live to see that slavery did not end entirely even up to 1937 in many of the American states including USA. **It was, however, strange for Mr. Pool to admit that the Christian powers could "check, diminish and cut off the supply". It is, therefore, an enigma why Mr. Pool did not advise those powers to do the needful.**

Before closing our discussion on Mr. Pool, we reiterate that only the Bible contains clear-cut injunctions to enslave others perpetually while Jews as well as Christians had always been following the same. Jesus Christ, St. Peter, St. Paul and numerous other celebrities among the Christians have been upholding slavery and advising the slaves to serve the civil authorities and their human masters in the manner they were obliged to serve Jesus Christ. Writers like Thornton Stringfellow had been strongly advocating slavery up to 1856. Such writers stopped supporting enslavement only after the

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<sup>601</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammedanism*, p. 393.

US declaration for emancipation of slavery 1863. As regards the colonies of the Western Powers, the readers may find enough material in our chapters 2 to 6 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume. In practice, however, slavery did prevail everywhere though in a concealed manner. Even the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1848 failed to bring the desired effect. Subsequently, there had been world conference of human rights under the auspices of UNO at Vienna had been more effective to eliminate slavery from most of the countries in the world. Even so it continues to exist at minimal level in its crude form and on a vast scale under new forms of slavery as discussed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of the book.

**Ch. 12-**

## TARGET ISLAM - II

As stated earlier, we shall be dealing only with three out of many other sources engaged in anti Islamic propagation about slavery. William Gervase Clarence Smith shall, therefore, be the next critic to be discussed in the following.

### **William Gervase Clarence-Smith**

William Gervase Clarence-Smith, a professor of economic history of Asia and Africa at SOAS, University of London, authored his book '*Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*' in 2006 in which he has spared no efforts to criticize Islam especially in respect of slavery. The very title of the book is misleading for the readers who start the book with the hope to find clear-cut abolition of slavery and its non-existence in the Islamic world. While going through the book, however, one comes across various instances and comments of Mr. Clarence Smith repudiating the supposed claim of abolition by Islam. He presupposes that Islam and the Holy Prophet (pbAh) were taken as champions of abolition where as factually they were patronizers and promoters of slavery since inception of Islam.

The title of the book gives the impression that Islam had perhaps asserted having abolished the slavery. Mr. Smith, therefore, took keen interest to disprove abolition of slavery in Islam. The correct position was that instead of enjoining immediate abolition of slavery, the holy Prophet of Islam had declared his mission to perfect good moral character of human beings. It has been reported that:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّمَا بَعَثْتُ لِأَنْمَامٍ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

Abū Hurayrah relates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "**I have only been sent to perfect good moral**

**character.**<sup>602</sup>

In this regard, no other religion in the world can compete Islam for preaching good moral ethics and putting into practice the best possible treatment with the friends or foes.

It is an established fact that the primary duty of all the true prophets of the Lord had always been to invite their followers to worship no one except the one and the only Lord God of the universe and to live by the commandments given by Him. The Qur'ān as well as the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) are full of such injunctions for the believers. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and the conspicuous assignment of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) was the perfection of good moral character of human beings. For this, the believers receive primary guidance from the Qur'ān and the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and especially his traditions how to treat other human beings including parents, wives, women, the poor, the rich, the friends or foes, masters or slaves, black or white or people of any race in the world. For a short detail the readers may go through our chapters s.v. '*Moral Revolution through Islam*', and our chapters on Human Rights.

Elsewhere in the book we have gone into details to explain why immediate abolition of slavery was not enjoined by the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Anyhow, it was a great task that Islam forbade all types of slavery except captives of war and those born as slaves in home. These two reforms reduced the slavery to a minimum. This along with the most important reform that slaves have to be treated as ones own brethren and imposition of various restrictions on exploitation or torture of the slaves made them equally respected members of the society. Islam had enjoined to feed and clothe the slaves in the same pattern you adopt for yourself. No hard work or humiliation of slaves was allowed by Islam. These and many other reforms were enough to make slavery benign though not extinct from the society. Acceptance of slaves as full human beings with equal

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<sup>602</sup> Musnad Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadith No. 8595.

rights in respect of provisions, work and justice was such a great reform that other nations in the world have lagged about 1435 years behind Islam in respect of accepting a black negro, a Shudra, a mulatto as one's own brother and human being i.e. a **man among other men**. (Franz Fanon). Similarly, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) was unaware of the fact that Islam had fulfilled his dream as quoted below about 1300 years before his birth. He dreamed that:

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

A short reference to such efforts of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) is made in our chapters, s.v. '*Moral Revolution through Islam*' and '*Islamic Reforms to Mitigate Slavery*'. The readers may, therefore, kindly go through the same. In the present context, we need to point out that the Muslims feel elated especially for the Islamic reforms about purity of faith in one and the only Lord God of the Universe and human rights including slaves, women and oppressed classes among the human beings as enjoined by the Almighty. At many places in the Qur'ān, therefore, Islam stressed on absolute oneness or unity of God. Those interested to know details may go through the Qur'ān and Ahadith of the Prophet (pbAh) for better understanding of the theme. As regards human rights, Islam had been extremely conspicuous to firmly assert that:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).<sup>603</sup>

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good

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<sup>603</sup> Al-Qur'ān 49:13 Yusuf Ali.

action.<sup>604</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said to an (arab) companion: "You are not better than people (of other races) unless you excel them in piety."<sup>605</sup>

For further details please refer to chapter 1 of this Volume, s.v. '*Kingdom of God on Earth*'.

It would have been better for Prof. Clarence-Smith to reread the Bible and also to keep in mind the history of slavery in the western Christendom during 1530 to 1950 before writing his book, '*Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*'. The readers may also refer to our chapters 7 and 8 of the Book s.v. '*Bible Authenticates and Perpetuates Slavery*' and '*Slavery and Christianity*' in the first volume. Readers may also go through our chapters of 2<sup>nd</sup> volume titled: '*British Role in Slave Trade*', '*Slavery the Backbone of New World Economy*', '*Horrors of Slavery*', '*Dehumanization of Slaves*', and '*Genocide of Indigenous People*'. It is, therefore, extremely surprising for us that a scholar like Prof. William Gervase Clarence-Smith might have been ignorant of the injunctions and additions about slavery in the Bible or his oblivion about 400 years of the worst type of slavery committed by the western Christendom in Europe, in the American Continents, in Australia, Indo-China, India and thousands of islands and small countries in the world. His criticism about the practice of the slavery in the Islamic world, therefore, shows nothing except his bias against Islam. We, therefore, accord no values to his writings.

Just in the beginning of his introduction "*The Embarrassing Institution*", Prof. Smith quotes from Michael Salman as recorded in the following:

Accusations of slavery are a lasting source of anxiety for all civilizations. Mortified that slavery should have persisted in medieval Christendom, some European writers have blamed Islamic influences. Muslims writers for their part, often display intense unease that Islam accepted slavery for so long without

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<sup>604</sup> Hadith, Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 7, Ch. 3

<sup>605</sup> Jame Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 1361.

any mass movement emerging to advocate abolition.<sup>606</sup> Intellectual paralyses springs from a contradictory desire to condemn slavery and spare Islam.<sup>607</sup>

The observation that some European writers blamed Islamic influences for persistence of slavery during medieval Christendom is entirely ridiculous. The so-called European writers could not have been ignorant of the fact that the first and the primarily recorded sanction regarding enslavement of different people and to keep them as their property forever was found nowhere else than in the Bible. It was entirely due to the Bible that slavery became a divinely blessed institution among the Israelites from 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. There came no change in its sanctity up to the death of Jesus Christ. Instead of introducing any reforms, Jesus Christ preached to the slaves to give wholehearted obedience to their human masters. Similarly, the writings of St. Peter and Paul might not have escaped the eyes of the so-called western writers. History of Greeks, the Spartans, the Romans and subsequently, the Christians as successors of those nations continued to promote and protect slavery as an institution blessed by the Lord. **The Christian west also cannot deny the fact that the banner of the church, the kings, the barons and prominent writers among the Christian west had always been held high against the slaves and the oppressed classes of human beings.** Right from the time of Moses the Jews had continued to avail the benefits of enslavement. Subsequently, the Christians as

<sup>606</sup> As regards the intense anxiety about nonexistence of any mass movement in the world of Islam to get rid of slavery, we find no Muslim writers expressing the same. No one except Mr. Clarence Smith seemed to be obsessed with the anxiety. We, therefore, need to remind him that marvelous Islamic reforms in the human rights, preachings of manumission of Slaves, universal brotherhood of mankind and equality of basic human rights for all the descendants of Adam and Eve on earth had reduced slaves to such minimal numbers that they could not be expressed as a percentage of the Muslim community. A small number of slaves being treated nicely could not have, therefore, assembled to make a mass movement.

<sup>607</sup> William Gervase Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 1.

their successors continued further expansion in the institution of slavery. As such, the institution starting from Jews and lasting up to first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD covered a period of about 3200 years during which human beings had been worst sufferers in the world. The church as well as most of the writers in the west up to 1850s had been supporting and praising enslavement of the weaker nations and especially the Negroes for prosperity and development of the western nations. Even John J. Pool took up the courage to criticize slavery about 25-27 years after the Emancipation Proclamation of USA 1863/65. Writers like him, therefore, have no justification to criticize others or to transfer the guilt of enslavement either to the Muslims or other nations in the world.

We queerly note the observation of Mr. Clarence Smith that '*some European writers have blamed Islamic influences*' for persistence of slavery in the medieval Christendom. Such writers must be knowing that the Christian world had started adverse propaganda against Islam right from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to prohibit the Christians from receiving any good influences of Islamic institutions. We, therefore, fail to understand why the Christians had been so inclined to accept Islamic influences only in case of slavery. The allegation, in fact, is baseless simply because slavery had been a well-established institution since about 2000 years before the advent of Islam. The Christians also continued to practise slavery on a vast scale from the first century AD to about 1937 AD. Jesus Christ, St. Peter, Paul and many Christian fathers had been advising their followers to obey their human masters ungrudgingly in the manner they were supposed to serve Jesus Christ. The church fathers during the entire history of Christianity have been supporting enslavement of the helpless and downtrodden people in the world. Even Martin Luther (1483-1546), the famous protestant reformer had been siding with the princes and the big landlords to crush the agitation or revolts of the slaves, serfs and poor peasants struggling for freedom and better living conditions.

Christianity did not stop enslaving people even after advent of the Islam. The colonization period extending over 400 years was perhaps the worst period of the history of humankind when the European nations inflicted such torture and miseries on the slaves that were unbecoming of human masters. While the Muslims have always been treating slaves as their brethren, the Christians have been dealing with them as despicable beasts of burden or inanimate beings to be treated, exchanged, stored, transported or disposed off like other commodities. Hundreds of books are available in the market to explain the inhuman tortures inflicted on slaves by the American farmers and the industrialists. The readers can go through the same to discover the truth. There had been no scheme of manumission nor had the enslavers ever clothed, fed or kept the slaves in the manner befitting the human beings.

Let not the writers like Mr. Clarence Smith forget that from the very beginning of Islam, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and his companions had always been denouncing slavery and exhorting others to manumit the slaves. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) himself had manumitted a large number of slaves while his companions and the followers also manumitted innumerable slaves following the tradition of the Holy Prophet. As against this, we find not a single person manumitted by Jesus Christ, St. Peter, St. Paul or any of the earliest Christian fathers, Popes or the bishops etc.

Mr. Clarence Smith's observation that '*intellectual paralysis springs from a contradictory desire to condemn slavery and spare Islam*' is also astonishing for us. We find him the worst sufferer from the same disorder due to the fact that he was willfully distorting the well-established historical facts. Being himself a victim of moral paralysis he had lost consciousness to maintain his integrity as a professor, scholar or a historian. He had, therefore, forgotten about the ancient history of the Greeks and the Romans who had been running their economy entirely through exploitation of the slaves.

The church, too, had been supporting slavery vehemently till it became futile for it to fight against the worldwide acceptance of abolition of slavery after 1950. Prior to that they continued to approve and support capturing of hundreds of millions of slaves from the African continent and from other places throughout the world without showing any disgust for the same. The clergy or the pontiffs never said a single word against the most cruel and killing transportation of human beings as if they were inanimate things or beasts. How could they be oblivious of the extreme humiliation and cruel extraction of labor from the slaves? Genocide of hundreds of millions of the indigenous people in the American and the Australian continents will always continue to serve as a slur on the face of the so-called civilized West. For details please go through our chapters on '*Horros of Slavery*' and '*Dehumanization of the Slaves*' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vol of the book. In view of hundreds of book describing the inhuman treatment of the Christians with the slaves in their colonies there remains no possibility that the writings of people like John J. Pool or Prof. Clarence Smith may obliterate the facts from the annals of the history of the world.

Another attempt of Mr. Clarence Smith to malign Islam is evident from the following:

A preliminary and tentative stab at quantification further shows that slavery in Islam was on a grand scale. (...) Islam played a neglected role in the process (of abolition).<sup>608</sup>

The accusation quoted above contains nothing except ill will and prejudice of Prof. Clarence Smith against Islam. **He had no data to prove the 'grand scale'** as alleged by him. He also ignored the fact that only Islam had opened the highway towards abolition of slavery for 1400 years in the past. **It is also worth noting here that treating slaves kindly like one's own brothers and persuasion for manumission of slaves in Islam had not been caused by any factors other than the divine commandments for the same. None of the reforms cropped up from any human agitation,**

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<sup>608</sup> Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, p. 2.

**mass movement or slave revolts.** Moral excellence of Islam was, therefore, based on divine guidance than any outside pressure or circumstantial exigencies in the world. Prohibition of many sources of slavery except the captives of war, better treatment with them assimilation of slaves in the society and treating them like one's own kith and kin enjoying full human rights except freedom were put into practice merely through the moral suasion of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). The matter of treatment of the slaves like one's own kith and kin was so important that the Almighty allowed the Muslim women not to observe purdha from their slaves (Al-Qur'ān 24:31).

In contrast to the same, the orientalists and other western writers must take into account four hundred years of inhuman treatment, plunder and subjugation of the underdeveloped countries and loss of millions of lives to win the human rights. In spite of worldwide propaganda, many proclamations declarations and enactments of the parliaments in Europe about the human rights, the people of the underdeveloped nations have not been able to attain recognition, equality of rights, status and brotherhood with the European nations till today. **The fact is that no other religion except Islam preached and implemented universal brotherhood of man and equality of social status, rights and privileges for all the descendants of Adam on earth.**

### **Kind Treatment with Slaves:**

Islam not only believes in universal brotherhood of all human beings on earth but it also encourages the believers to treat the down-trodden, the impoverished and the enslaved people to be treated in a manner befitting a member of human society in the world. Reference to Islamic principle of kind and generous treatment with slaves has also been made in the *Encyclopedias Britannica* as quoted below:

The Koran enjoins the good treatment of the slave, and manumission is encouraged as an act of piety. The child of a slave-concubine by her master is free-born, and the mother is

usually freed also. The slave “born in the house” is generally regarded as a member of the family, and to sell such a slave, except for incorrigible misconduct, would be condemned by public opinion. The favourite slaves of a ruler often hold high office as confidential advisers, as administrators of provinces or as leaders in the army. The master is bound to care for his slave in sickness and old age, and to maintain his wife and family. Facilities are afforded for self-redemption and for ransom. The so-called “praedial slaves” on the other hand would generally be members of a conquered tribe, who remained on the land which had passed into the hands of the conquerors. Their status differed entirely from that of a slave.<sup>609</sup>

Here is another quotation from the same source referring to the position in Abyssinia and Nigeria:

No court of law can then recognize any rights based on the claim of any person to property in the person of another. Every slave can assert his freedom without any ransom or formality and an owner is liable to process of law for attempting to detain a slave against his will, or to capture a runaway. On the other hand, it is not a crime for a master to retain a slave if both desire to remain in that relationship. It is permissive as contrasted with compulsory emancipation. Local ordinances have at the same time enacted that the acquisition of new slaves and all dealings in slaves are a penal offence, and that all children born after the date of the ordinance are free-born. These methods were effective in Nigeria, and where adopted by the emperor of Abyssinia, with much success prior to the conquest of the country by Italy in 1936.<sup>610</sup>

As said earlier, Islam had closed all doors of slavery except temporary retention of the captives of war. In this respect the Encyclopedia of Islam observes that:

What this amounts to is that slavery could scarcely continue to exist in Islam without the constantly renewed contribution of peripheral or external elements, either directly captured in war or imported commercially under the fiction of the Holy War, from foreign territory.<sup>611</sup>

Christianity on the other hand had been supporting slavery and perpetrating all inconceivable brutalities on

<sup>609</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 785-786.

<sup>610</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, William Benton Publisher, London, p. 786.

<sup>611</sup> Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 26.

the slaves from the time of Jesus Christ up to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The abolition process took a long time with thousands of illuminated scholars and reformers protesting against slavery for centuries together. Great credit also goes to the humanists, the moralists, the abolitionists to get rid of the curse. We can, however, count these efforts only as helping elements to abolish slavery. Actually there had been two main factors which accelerated the pace of abolition in the colonies. There had been thousands of slave revolts causing lots of devastation of property and millions of deaths for the freedom fighters. The other main cause had been innovations and inventions of new machinery increasing efficiency in the output reducing the necessity of slave labor for more and more output. **Diminishing utility of crude labor was, therefore, the economic consideration accelerating emancipation of slaves than moral evolution of the Christianity.** We shall be devoting a part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of the book to provide details of events leading to abolition of slavery in the West. Presently, we continue with Mr. Clarence Smith in the following.

After enumerating various other shortcomings of Islam about slavery, Clarence-Smith observed that:

Slaves of inner Asian Turkmens had to 'watch the flocks, prepare the food, make felts, and weave carpets'. Those belonging to South Asian Muslim performed a variety of outdoor tasks. In Islamic Southeast Asia, slaves filled 'almost every conceivable function'. A Malay master around 1900 expected slaves to 'plant his fields, weed and tend his crops, to wash and guard his kine [cattle], ... to punt his boat, to attend to him upon his journeys, to cook his rice, and to serve in his house'. Similar lists of duties were recorded for East Africa. Servile labour was common on medium and even small properties, and slaves were widely employed in irrigation, pastoralism, mining, transport, public works, proto-industry, and construction.<sup>612</sup>

Although Mr. Clarence has failed to quote the source of his information recorded above yet presuming it as a

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<sup>612</sup> Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, p. 3-4.

truth, we find nothing too strange or obnoxious in the narrative keeping in view the overall treatments with the slaves throughout the world. Let Mr. Clarence Smith refresh himself with the treatment of the slaves at the hands of the Greeks and the Romans which has been recorded by the historians. It will also be advisable that the readers may go through our chapters on colonization to know the treatment of the western nations with the Negroes, the Indians or other indigenous people in various lands. Factually, no Christian community ever treated slaves as their guests. The worst treatment of slaves or indigenous people in the world had been at the hands of the western Christendom.

Mr. Clarence Smith also observed that:

While some sources depicted placid relations, others told much more somber stories. Of Istanbul in 1870, one observer noted that slaves 'pass through the hands of ten or twenty masters, who make them lead the life of cab-horses, beat them at intervals, and at last sell them. Unusually, quite a few slaves in the Barbary states<sup>613</sup> of North Africa wrote down their experiences, leading historians to make comparisons with the Communist Gualag. To take an extreme example, the ulama prohibited mutilating slaves or filing their teeth, on pain of severe penalties for owners and emancipation for slaves. However, in the sixteenth-century, Barbary corsairs branded slaves on the soles of their feet<sup>614</sup>, while Crimean Tatars

<sup>613</sup> The Barbary Coast was the term used by Europeans from the 16th until the 19th century to refer to much of the collective land of the Berber people. Today, the term Greater Maghreb or simply "Maghreb" corresponds roughly to "Barbary". The term "Barbary Coast" emphasizes the Berber coastal regions and cities throughout the middle and western coastal regions of North Africa – what is now Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. The English term "Barbary" (and its European varieties: Barbaria, Berbérie, etc.) referred mainly to the entire Berber lands including non-coastal regions, deep into the continent, as seen in European geographical and political maps published during the 17–20th centuries. Barbarians, therefore, imply wild, uncivilized, uneducated, cruel and violent people. Incidentally, the western writers describe the Moors also among the barbarians. They had been ruling over Spain from about 711 to 1492 AD. Almost all scholars of Europe admit that Europe's transition from dark ages to renaissance had been caused primarily due to proliferation of knowledge, sciences, arts and the civilization of the Moors of Spain.

<sup>614</sup> The readers must remember that Islam had strictly prohibited branding human beings in any manner. As regards the existence of

marked their foreheads. Nineteenth-century Egyptian owners marked the faces of slaves to deter fugitives, while Libyan Sufis burned the word 'Allah' on to their slaves. Born slaves in northern Nigeria received facial scars of servitude as late as the 1950s.<sup>615</sup>

Firstly, we observe that no other source certifies the observations in the first part of the quotation. As regards the second part pertaining to Barbary corsairs, the readers are requested to refresh themselves with the history of Vikings of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland from 8<sup>th</sup> century to 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. During the same period, all the European nations became involved in the crusades against the Muslim Asia. Even the origin of colonizers may be traced out to the same sources. Hence to accuse Barbary corsairs alone is a perversion of facts. Our chapters on colonization reveal true state of affairs. **As regards branding the slaves on their feet or foreheads, or their faces, the same had been the practice of the Romans with the fugitive slaves which continued to be followed by the American colonizers.** (*Slavery in the United States*, Wikipedia, See also William Blair, *The State of Slavery Amongst the Romans*, p. 110) The readers will also find many stories of branding the slaves by their Christian masters various states of USA in the forth coming chapters of the book.

Muslim law strictly prohibits disfiguring or ill-treatments with slaves whereas we find the Bible enjoining that the master of a loving slave "*shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever*" (Exo 21:6 KJV). Islam has prohibited even branding of the animals on their face.

Jabir reported that Allah's Messenger forbade (the animals to be beaten) on the face or cauterisation on the face.<sup>616</sup>

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such a practice during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it can more appropriately be attributed to the Christians themselves who had started colonizing the world by capturing and transportation of slaves from west Africa to the new world. As such, there must have been minimal involvement of the Muslims in such a heinous crime.

<sup>615</sup> Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery*, p. 4.

<sup>616</sup> *Shahih Muslim*, Book 24, Chapter 22, Hadith Number 5281:

Jabir reported that there happened to pass before Allah's Apostle an ass the face of which had been cauterised, whereupon he said: **Allah has cursed one who has cauterised it (on the face).**<sup>617</sup>

Cauterization of ears of certain animals has, however, been allowed. As regards branding of human beings on their faces, it is unheard of Muslim masters. Only missionaries like Clarence Smith had been making futile efforts to stigmatize Muslims with such and many other evils.

### **Clarence Smith's Perversion of Facts:**

Being a learned person, Mr. Clarence Smith might have been fully aware of killing, kidnapping and inhuman treatment of Negro slaves during the Trans-Atlantic Trade towards the American Continents and Europe extending over a period of 400 years. Hundreds of books have been written on the extremely coercive treatment, hard labor, genocide and unbearable torture perpetrated against the slaves in the American Continents up to at least 1937 AD. For the benefit of the readers, therefore, we have devoted some chapters to quote instances of the cruelties and unspeakable miseries inflicted on the slaves whether Negroes, Indians, whites or other human beings falling in the hands of the slave holders in the American continents. There had been thousands of insurrections and slave-revolts to get rid of the yoke of slavery for more than three centuries starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We, therefore, wonder how Mr. Clarence Smith could be oblivious of the entire history of the colonial period. Forgetting all inhuman treatments of the western colonizers, Mr. Clarence Smith tried to criticize and malign Islam with full vigour even though he had no authentic historical evidence to prove his calumnies against the Muslims. He says:

Slaves delivered their own verdict by engaging in rebellion, murder, sabotage and flight. Rahaina, taken by the Prophet from the defeated Jewish Qurayza tribe, may have tried to poison her illustrious master, and in 644, a Persian slave assassinated Umar b. al-Khattab, one of the rightly guided

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<sup>617</sup> *ibid*, Hadith Number 5283:

Caliphs. The Zanj Rebellion in 9<sup>th</sup> Century Iraq was among the most impressive servile insurrections in world history. Numbers of runaways were high, especially in harsh occupations such as diving for pearls in the Gulf. In Turkey, badly treated slaves 'have often been known to set fire to the wooden houses of Stamboul'.<sup>618</sup>

It is evident from the above that except for the incorrect interpretation of the revolt of Alvi Basri termed by him as Zanj Rebellion, Mr. Clarence smith had no other evidence to show cruel treatment of Muslims with the slaves who might have resorted to some insurrection to get rid of the curse of slavery. Finding no evidence from history, he had to rely on an unauthentic instance of Rayhana and the singular act of Firoz which he counted as revolts and rebellions to get rid of slavery.

Taking the case of Rayhana bint Shamun, we find no historical evidence of any coercion on her or her effort to win freedom. Rayhana bint Shamun bin Zaid bin Khanafa originally belonged to Banu Nudair tribe of the Jews at Medina who had become captive of war against Banu Qurayza in the Battle of Trench in 5 A.H. According to Ibn Ishaq, the Prophet (pbAh) had offered her the status of becoming his wife provided she accepted Islam but initially she refused the offer. Subsequently, she accepted Islam willingly and became a venerable wife of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Most of the historians agree that Shamun, the father of Rayhana had converted to Islam and he is counted among the faithful companions of the Prophet (pbAh). According to Ibn Saad, the Prophet (pbAh) had manumitted Rayhana and she married him thereafter. It is worth noting here that no Muslim historian have ever mentioned about her attempt to poison the Holy Prophet (pbAh). Clarence Smith himself is doubtful about the occurrence. Fakery of the story is, therefore, evident from the same.

### **Abu Lulu Firoz:**

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<sup>618</sup> Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, p. 5.

As regards *Abu Lulu Firoz Nihavandi* the assassinator of Umar b. Al-Khattab, he was a captive of war handed over to Mugheera bin Shuba who was receiving two Dirhams daily as Kharaj from him. While Umar was passing through the streets of Medina Firoz approached him with the request that his Kharaj was unjustified. After inquiring about his various sources of earnings, the Caliph found the Jiziyah reasonable. *Firoz* then went away murmuring. The next morning, Umar was leading the prayers when Firoz appeared from the hideout and assassinated him in the mosque. Prof. Clarence-Smith perhaps intentionally concealed the fact that *Firoz*, was a Christian soldier who had served under the commander Rostam Farrokhzad of the Sassanids/ Persian Empire. **Motive behind the assassination of the rightly guided Caliph might have been a conspiracy of the Romans or the Iranians simply because Umar had conquered vast territories including the Holy Land from Rome besides eliminating the 1000 years old Persian Empire.** *Firoz*, therefore, might have killed him to avenge the defeat of the Romans as well as the Persians. He in fact had been serving as a soldier under the Persians to defend that Empire. In the circumstances quoted above we can take *Firoz* as a religious fanatic or a nationalist instead of an insurrectionist as a slave. Long after his death, some nationalists and the Shiite community of Persia venerated *Firoz* as their national Hero by constructing his tomb on the Road from Kashan to Fins, in the eleventh-century. It is evident from the above that instead of revolting against slavery, *Firoz* assassinated Umar due to his grudge against him as stated above.

## **Zanj Rebellion**

We find no such title in the Muslim history of the earlier centuries. According to Al-Tabri it was during 9<sup>th</sup> century AD that one Alvi Al-Basri assembled many Shiite people including slaves to revolt against the Abbasid caliphate. Al-Tabri, therefore, names it as revolt of Ali Basri. No Muslim historian of the earlier or medieval Islam ever named it as Zanj Rebellion. Since the Christian

orientalists or historians had termed it as Zanj Rebellion, therefore, Sayyid Amir Ali (1849-1928) described events pertaining to the rebellion under the same title i.e. *The Zanj Rebellion*. He writes that:

The Negro Revolt in Chaldaea, which commenced in the reign of *Mutazz*,<sup>619</sup> was most disastrous. It was headed by a Persian, who allowed the wildest licence to his followers, and thus acquired the name of *Khabis* (Reprobate). Negro slaves from all parts of the country flocked to his standard, and he made himself master of Chaldaea and Ahwaz, and for several years defied all efforts to reduce him. In 882 a.c. he was attacked and annihilated by Muwafiki. His stronghold was destroyed, his followers were dispersed, and he himself was killed.<sup>620</sup>

Strictly speaking, it was not a slave revolt but an attempt to overthrow the Abbasid Sunni caliphate to replace it with Alvi Shia Rule. The insurrection was led by a Shia leader called Alvi Basri who was also known as Ali bin Muhammad. He introduced himself as Ahmad bin Ali bin Esa bin Zaid bin Ali bin Husain bin Ali bin Abi Talib. Although the revolt had started during the reign of *Mutazz* in about 255 AH yet it continued for more than fourteen years i.e. during the Caliphates of *Muhtadi Billah*<sup>621</sup> and *Mutamid Alallah*.<sup>622</sup> *Alvi Basri* posed himself as the genuine claimant for the caliphate. Like many other revolts for succession to the caliphate starting from the time of the Umayyads to the end of the Abbasid caliphate, Ali bin Muhammad invited the Shia and other sects of Iran and Iraq including the Negro slaves to join him in the revolt. Although a good number of the companions of Alvi Basri including many leaders of his armies consisted of the Negro Slaves yet it is incorrect to highlight their campaigns as an abolitionist movement. The negro insurrectionist were neither fighting for their manumission nor agitating against ill-treatment from their masters. They simply intended to

<sup>619</sup> Reign 866-69 a.d. 252-256).

<sup>620</sup> Sayyid Amir Ali, *A Short History of Saracens*, (Karachi: National Book Foundation, 1975), p. 294.

<sup>621</sup> Reign 869-70 a.d. (256-257 a.h.)

<sup>622</sup> Reign 870-892 A.D. (257-279 a.h.)

institute the descendants of Ali ibn Abi Talib as the Caliphs of Islam. The observation of Clarence Smith that '*it was one of the most impressive servile insurrections in the World history*' is far from facts. Even the own writings of Clarence Smith disprove his contention. About Alvi Basri, he writes that:

**He proclaimed himself to be the Mehdi inscribing the title on all his surviving coins.** However, some of these also carried Khariji slogans. For a while, he espoused the Zaydi position that the most able person in the Prophet's tribe should rule, claiming filiation to Muhammad through 'Abbas. In a genealogical shift, he asserted his descent from Husayn, suggesting identification with Shi'i and Isma'ili notions of the infallible Imam.<sup>623</sup>

Despite temporarily threatening the foundations of the caliphate, Ali b. Muhammad was no Muslim Spartacus. He was a free man possibly of Persian origins, and some of his followers were also free whether pastoral Bedouins or settled farmers. He reserved high positions for them, even though Black slaves, employed to remove the saline crust from the land, formed the bulk of his forces. Despite the appellation Zanji, many of them probably came from the Horn and the Sahel, rather than from East Africa. A few White slaves joined the movement, including eunuchs and soldiers.<sup>624</sup>

**Turning slaves into slave-owners was 'Ali b. Muhammad's interpretation of justice,** a paradox which has been widely noted. Michael Brett suggests that unjustly deprived Muslims would thereby taste the fruits of conquest and empire. Some have alleged that **'Ali b. Muhammad wished to abolish plantation slavery, but he appears only to have criticized poor conditions. He certainly owned slaves and sold defeated foes. To the horror of pious critics, he even enslaved Arab women descended from the Prophet, after taking Basra in 871.'**<sup>625</sup>

During 15 years of the insurrections in different cities of Iran and Iraq, Alvi Basri caused innumerable deaths of the armies fighting for and against the Abbasids. Ultimately, al-Muwaffik the younger brother of caliph *Mutamid AlaAllah* succeeded to crush the revolt and assassinate Ali bin Muhammad in 269 A.H. i.e. 882 A.D.

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<sup>623</sup> Clarence-Smith, Islam and the Abolition of Slavery, p. 63-64.

<sup>624</sup> *ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>625</sup> *ibid*, p. 64.

Although a small number of slaves had always been forming part of the Muslim armies yet the insurrection led by Alvi Basri had a substantial number of them. Even so this was the first and perhaps the last insurrection joined by numerous slaves not to agitate against slavery but to change Abbasid's caliphate into Alvi Imamia. Excluding this, there never had been any conspicuous revolt joined by or prompted by slaves. Besides the vested interests of the Shiites of Iran and Iraq, the insurrectionist also **had some disguised blessings from the Byzantines who, according to Sayyid Amir Ali, took advantage of the troubles that beset the Caliphate and made several inroads into Moslem territory.** At first they carried everything before them, but when Syria fell into the hands of Ahmed bin Tulun<sup>626</sup> they were opposed by the Tulunide governor of Tarsus, and defeated in a series of battles.<sup>627</sup>

## Brill's Encyclopedia of Islam

Out of many other writings criticizing Islam severely, we choose the Brill's Encyclopedia for our comments. The contributors to the Brill's Encyclopedia of Islam have tried to make a clean sweep of the history of Christian slavery during the colonization period i.e. from 16<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The article on the practice of slavery in the middle ages, therefore, starts with the following words:

Throughout the whole Islamic History, down to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, slavery has always been an institution tenacious of life and deeply rooted in custom.<sup>628</sup>

Although slavery always continued to prevail throughout the world eversince 3000 BC yet the writer of encyclopedia felt shy of making any reference to that. Since Islam was the target for all his criticism, therefore,

<sup>626</sup> Ahmad ibn Tūlūn (835-884 AD, Arabic: أَمْهَدُ بْنُ طُلُونْ originally Turkic slave-soldier was the founder of the Tulunid dynasty that ruled Egypt and Syria between 868 and 905.

<sup>627</sup> Sayyid Amir Ali, *A Short History of Saracens*, p. 294.

<sup>628</sup> Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 31.

he singled out only the history of Muslims from the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The readers may, however, have a fresh look on Gen 10:20-28, 16:1-12, 27:30-41, 47:13-22, Deu 20:10-18 etc. in the Old Testament. How can they deny continuity of slavery in Greece and Rome from 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Being successors of Rome, the Christian nations did not stop enslaving weaker people and nations at any time thereafter till the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Detailed evidence to the same has been brought by us on record in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of the Book. We also have devoted two chapters of the book to highlight the Christian practice and view point about perpetuation of slavery and also their actual treatment of slaves from the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Encyclopedia also observed that:

The wars of conquest which after the fulgurous expansion of Islam in the 1<sup>st</sup> century of the Hijra continued throughout the Middle Ages to further its spread in one direction or in other. Despite setbacks elsewhere, provided the conquerors with an almost ceaseless stream of prisoners of both sexes, many of whom remained in slavery.<sup>629</sup>

The remarks merely express disapproval of Muslim conquests. Instead of some definite information, the writer had to make good use of his imagination. He continued to say that:

Outside the house, many slaves served as assistants in business, or carried on business themselves, in accordance with their legal position, with a considerable measure of independence. Others cultivated their masters' fields. Examples are found of monumental building-works carried out by slave-labour, especially by prisoners-of-war in government service. But it must be emphasized that medieval Islam seems scarcely to have known the system of large-scale rural exploitation based on an immense and anonymous slave labour-force. One bit attempt along these lines, carried out by the 'Abbasids in order to revivify the lands of 'Irak, the centre of their empire, ended, during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, in the prolonged and terrible revolt of the Zandj slaves, who had been imported from the eastern coast of Africa to bring the swamps of Lower Mesopotamia under

<sup>629</sup> Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 31.

cultivation.<sup>630</sup>

**The writer himself admits that: medieval Islam seems scarcely to have known the system of large-scale rural exploitation based on an immense and anonymous slave labour-force. This, therefore, shows that there had been no large scale miseries of the slaves within the Muslim states.** It also needs to be kept in mind that Muslim expansion in Europe came to an end since 1683 AD. Meanwhile the era for the discoveries, expansion and new conquests of the European nations had already started from 1500 AD. For 500 years, thereafter, the Christian nations of Europe continued to plunder Asia, Africa, American continents, Australia and many other nations throughout the world. Their cruelties regarding hunting down, capture, transportation and inhuman treatment of the Negro and other slaves has no match in the human history. Never had there been genocide of the indigenous people on such a mass scale prior to the onslaught of the western nations in the American continents, Africa and Australia including certain parts of the South Asian regions. Since the Western writers are bent upon distorting the facts, therefore, we had no option to restore the truth except by quoting certain instances of their barbarity and dehumanization from the ancient times to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from the books written by the western scholars.

In spite of all the prejudice of the writer of the article about slavery referred to above, his evaluation of truth deserves appreciation from us. He says:

But setting aside the suffering caused by the slave traffic (all the more if castration was performed), and taking into account the general harshness of the times, **the condition of the majority of slaves with their Muslim masters was tolerable and not too much at variance with the quite liberal regulations which the official morality and law had striven to establish.** Despite the obvious points of inferiority, it was even known for them to attain happy and enviable positions, in material prosperity and influence,

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<sup>630</sup> ibid, p. 33.

especially in rich and highly-placed families and, even more, in the immediate entourage of the sovereign. They had, in addition, the prospect of liberation, which it was not always overbold to hope for.<sup>631</sup>

Also worthy of consideration, for their number and for their effects on Muslim society, **were the compulsory manumissions, under the conditions imposed by the Law, of concubines who had borne children, as well as the voluntary manumissions of slaves of both sexes, especially Muslims, by their Muslim masters.** Thus apostasy was rendered attractive for Christians; though not, as a rule, imposed on them, it was insistently suggested. We have already said that enfranchisement is an act of piety, widely practised; it is frequently the result of a vow or oath (conditional oath, expiation for a violated oath). The beneficiary ranks unreservedly as a free man or woman; the bond of clientship which continues to exist, and whose existence is felt, presents not so much a slight moral derogation as an inestimable advantage in the reality of a highly compact social structure.<sup>632</sup>

In case, the institution of slavery had started some time after Noah then it existed at least 4000 years before Islam. It was, therefore, not only a received institution but also the prevalent position in almost all the nations. Any abrupt decision to abrogate slavery could, therefore, have failed to bring the desired results. Islam, therefore, had to tolerate slavery merely as a necessary evil than something enjoined by the Lord. Keeping in view the human nature, the Almighty suggested various measures for gradual eradication of slavery from the society. The same have been discussed in the preceding chapters. The readers can, however, observe that Islam did not favor perpetuity of the institution.

## **The Greatest Reformation in Human Rights**

Here is the verdict of the Lord about mankind revealing to them the basic criteria to evaluate their dignity and ranks before Him. God said:

O mankind! we created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and Tribes, that ye may

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<sup>631</sup> ibid, p. 33.

<sup>632</sup> ibid, p. 33-34.

know Each other (Not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the Most honoured of you In the sight of Allah is (He who is) the Most righteous of you. and Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).<sup>633</sup>

The Almighty has, therefore, revealed the true basis of distinction against each other and also the divine criteria of judgment about human ranks in the Hereafter. Only those who excel in their piety and rectitude due to the fear of their accountability before the Lord will be honored by Him on the Day of Judgment. The Lord will accord no value to the physical power, wealth, race, color, region, nation, language or ancestry of the individuals to decide their fate. During the Farewell Hajj, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) was stressing the same criteria in the following words:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action.<sup>634</sup>

At other occasions the Holy Prophet (pbAh) said:

الناس كلهم بني آدم، وآدم خلق من التراب.

All people are descendants of Adam and Adam was created from Soil.

The Holy Prophet (pbAh) also said:

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said to an (arab) companion: "You are not better than people (of other races) unless you excel them in piety."<sup>635</sup>

All this negates the self-claimed superiority of people on the basis of birthrights, nations, colors or other considerations mentioned above. The most conspicuous achievement of Islam about human rights has, therefore, been the establishment of universal brotherhood and equality of rights between all human beings on earth. These are the key elements to establish the basis for determination of the human rights. It is,

<sup>633</sup> Al-Qur'ān 49:13 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>634</sup> Hadith, *Sahih Bukhari*, Vol. 7, Ch. 3

<sup>635</sup> *Jame Al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 1361.

therefore, futile to talk about any human rights unless and until we abide by the guiding principles revealed by the Almighty and also elaborately explained by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh).

## **Assimilation of Slaves in the Community**

Referring to assimilation of slaves in the community, the Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam* records that:

**From 'Abbasid times onward, more than one freedman rose very high indeed in the military and political hierarchy**, even to the most exalted ranks to which a free Muslim might attain. Their very names, which they continued to bear, betraying to the world their former servitude and even their irremediable condition as eunuchs (some of them commanded armies), were no obstacle to such a rise. In the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century, such men as Mu'nis in Baghdad and the negro Kafur in Egypt afford a remarkable illustration of the system. **A number of Muslim dynasties, in Spain as well as in Egypt and the heart of Asia, have an avowedly servile origin.** A Turkish "slave" dynasty reigned at Dihli in the 13th century [see dihli sultanate]. The "mamluk" sultans of Cairo actually made such an origin a condition of coming to power, through a recognized *cursus-honorum*. (...) **As for maternal ancestry, reigning sovereigns almost everywhere, including the 'Abbasid caliphs, were commonly sons of slave concubines, of widely varying provenance.**<sup>636</sup>

It is therefore easy to imagine the importance of slavery in that mingling of populations to which Muslim institutions have been so favourable. The number of new slaves introduced into the great cities in certain years could be reckoned in thousands; the slave element formed a considerable part of **the urban population and had a marked tendency to blend with it, not only through enfranchisement but also through sexual intermixing, which was commonplace.** Crossbreeding with blacks may have had ethnological consequences, which it is not within our competence to analyse. The slave-trade was of prime importance in economic life; the taxes imposed on it were a source of profit to the authorities. Although slave-labour was for the most part employed in household duties and was not generally applied to productive work, yet the military function of large numbers of male slaves was one of the salient

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<sup>636</sup> Brill's *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. I, p. 33-34.

features of this civilization, and had repercussions on the foreign and domestic policies of many mediaeval states.<sup>637</sup>

In view of the above, even the Christians in the West can discern the true spirit of Islam to abrogate slavery and to treat the slaves or the ex-slaves at par with other members of Muslim Society. The Christian West miserably lags behind the Muslims in treatment of people from other nations and especially the slaves. In spite of all their proclamations about the equality of rights and social status of other people in the world, the Christians can neither absorb among themselves the blacks nor can they intermix with them like their own kith and kin. **The superiority complex is so deep-rooted in the Western Christendom that they may not be able to accept parity of other human beings with them even within 1000 years to come.** It is in this respect that the Muslim society excels in humaneness over the feigned aggrandizement of the Europeans and the American Christians.

## Enslavement of African Muslims

The contributor of the article in the Encyclopedia also reports that:

**Christendom nevertheless busied itself with supplying its American colonies with African negroes, thrown into cruel bondage. Among these unfortunates, Muslims seem to have been particularly numerous in Brazil, where from 1807 to 1835 they fomented the great slave revolts,** rigorously quelled, which shook Bahia (on their cultural influence and their disappearance, see R. Ricard and R. Bastide, in *Hesperis* for 1950 and 1952 respectively). In the Mediterranean, where the corsairs and "Barbary" pirates continued their ravages, perhaps to an even greater extent, after the establishment of Ottoman supremacy (see O Eck, *Seerauberei im Mittelmeer*, Munich-Berlin 1940), the bordering Christian powers retaliated almost down to the end of the 18th century, as they had done previously, by numerous captures. In this work the Knights of Malta took an active part: during the first half of the century, they sold to the French navy the men it needed as rowers on the galleys.

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<sup>637</sup> ibid, p. 34.

**More than ten thousand Muslim slaves attempted a revolt on the island in 1749;** Bonaparte liberated the two thousand Barbary slaves whom he found there in 1798.<sup>638</sup>

## Muslim Treatment of Slaves

The Christian West can hardly admit the non-existence of slave girls as prostitutes in a Muslim community. The encyclopedia, however, observed that the concubines or the slave used to be assimilated among the Muslims families like their own. The writer also acknowledged the kind and considerate treatment of Muslims with the Slaves as compared to their treatment by the American slave holders. He writes that:

**They formed, one may say, part of the family and, especially as concubines, the slave-girls came to be of one blood with it. Enfranchisements were usual,** but it was not unknown for a concubine who had borne a child to seek from her master a denial of paternity, since there were more advantages for her in remaining a slave than in marrying and running the risk of repudiation (...) It is therefore not surprising that, round about 1860, the Swiss Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, who knew Tunisian society, laid great stress on the customary mildness of urban servitude among the Muslims, as compared with the methods of American slave-holders.<sup>639</sup>

It has been further observed that:

The bulk of the slaves were black, but in the East a distinction was drawn between Ethiopians, who were paler and more highly prized, and negroes in the strict sense. Eunuchs were imported already castrated; in Mecca, the majority of them were in the service of the mosques. All the European writers lay stress on the good treatment these blacks customarily received at the hands of their town-dwelling masters, in contrast to the dreadful conditions of their capture and subsequent transportation under the lash of the Arab or Arabicized slavers. They readily adopted Islam and became deeply attached to it (some even thanked God for having led them to the true Faith through their captivity: Doughty, Arabia Deser ta', i, 554-5).<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>638</sup> ibid, p. 34.

<sup>639</sup> ibid, p. 35.

<sup>640</sup> ibid, p. 35.

## Abolition of Slavery

About the abolition of slavery, the contributor of the article gives credit to the Christendom than to the Muslims. He says:

Although Islam, in teaching and in actuality, has favoured the emancipation of slaves, it was only under an overwhelming foreign influence that it began, about a hundred years ago, an evolution in doctrine and in practice towards the total suppression of slavery, its abolition in law and custom. This evolution, which has continued, is in some regions still incomplete. Here we have one of the most typical examples of the transformation that the Muslim world has undergone, through European pressure or example, from the mid-eighth century down to our own day.<sup>641</sup>

While we fully appreciate the collective efforts of thousands of the Christian humanists, moralists, reformers, abolitionists and the statesmen spread over a period of two hundred years of the European enlightenment period yet aside from their moral suasion, **there had been hundreds of revolts and agitations to win freedom for the slaves.** There had also been the economic reason for the abolition. The rapid mechanization was making the slave labor uneconomic for the industry as well as agriculture in the colonies. As against them, Islam's treatment of slaves like brethren of other Muslims and its exhortation for their manumission remains unmatched as the greatest reform on the humanitarian grounds.

## The Qur'an and Slavery

The Brill's encyclopedia records that:

The fact, brought out in the Kur'an, that slavery is in principle lawful, satisfies religious scruples. Total abolition might even seem a reprehensible innovation, contrary to the letter<sup>1</sup> of the holy Book and the exemplary practice of the first Muslims. Nevertheless, contact with the realities of the modern world and its ideology began to bring about a discernible evolution in the thought of many educated Muslims before the end of the 19th century. They may be fond of emphasizing that Islam

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<sup>641</sup> ibid, p. 36.

has, on the whole, bestowed an exceptionally favourable lot on the victims of slavery. Yet they are ready to see that this institution, which is linked to one particular economic and social stage, has had its day. The reformer Sayyid Ahmad Khan in India, goes so far as to maintain, in a special work, *Ibtal-i-Ghulami*, which appeared in 1893, translated into Arabic in 1895, that the Kur'an (xlvi, 4) forbade the making of new slaves.<sup>642</sup>

As stated earlier, the slavery had been sanctified as a divinely approved institution in the Bible since 1300 BC. The Christians too continued to patronize the institution till the advent of Islam and long thereafter i.e. up to 1950. The Qur'ān, therefore, had to tolerate it as a necessary evil to be eradicated gradually from the society. **We, therefore, do not agree with the remarks of the writer that Qur'ān approved it as a lawful institution except in case of temporary retention of the captives of war taken prisoners directly from the battlefield.** Although the Qur'ān did not outlaw slavery abruptly yet it also has no injunction for the permanence of the institution. Besides good treatment of the slaves, Manumission had always been stressed as one of the most virtuous deeds. Islam emphatically prohibited the Muslims to enslave free people. The so-called educated Muslims, therefore, had nothing to learn from the Christians in this respect.

It was perhaps due to the moral teachings of Islam that there had been many abolition movements besides moral suasion of the humanists and the reformers that the western nations stood compelled to arrive at universal declaration of abolition. The Muslims never had any objection to the same, and the slave holders if any among them readily freed their slaves.

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<sup>642</sup> ibid, p. 38.

# DARK AGES AND BACKGROUND OF THE CRUSADES

## Dark Ages

The Wikipedia describes Dark Ages as:

Dark Ages is a term of historical periodization traditionally meaning the Middle Ages. It emphasizes the demographic, cultural and economic deterioration that supposedly occurred in Western Europe following the decline of the Roman Empire. The label employs traditional **light-versus-darkness imagery** to contrast the "darkness" of the period with earlier and later periods of "light". The period is characterized by a relative scarcity of historical and other written records at least for some areas of Europe, rendering it obscure to historians.<sup>643</sup>

The term Dark Ages roughly covers the Middle Ages i.e. 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. **Italian scholar Petrach (1304-1374) conceived the term Dark Ages in about 1330.** Although some scholars suggest different periods yet many of them think that Dark Ages covered the entire period from the fall of Rome to Renaissance. Besides general conditions during the period, it is also relevant to our studies as a background to the crusades and for two important institutions cropping up during the period. One: the Vikings and the other: Chivalry. We shall be referring to the same briefly in the following:

The transition from Dark Ages to the Crusades and thereafter cannot be discussed without some reference to the Vikings and the age of Chivalry in Europe. Both these institutions highlight a continuity of the changing process from Dark Ages to the Crusades and exploration as harbingers of the modern civilization. We, therefore, shall be tracing out history of Europe from the Vikings.

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<sup>643</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.*Dark Ages*.

## The Vikings

**Originally Vikings implied any of the Scandinavian sea pirates and traders who raided and settled in parts of north Western Europe in the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.** Their period of activity almost coincided with the dark ages of Europe i.e. up to 10<sup>th</sup> century but its impact had been the harbinger of exploration of seas in the world. Vikings, therefore, formed backbone of the crusaders and can also be rightly taken as the forefathers of the colonizers. Corporate traders of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and thereafter were benefiting from their achievements. It has been said that:

For 300 years, from the 8th to 11th centuries, the Vikings took the world by storm. In search of land, slaves, gold, and silver, these brave warriors and explorers set sail from their homes in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. They raided across Europe, traveled as far as Baghdad, in modern Iraq, and even reached North America. The speed and daring of Viking attacks was legendary. Christian monks wrote with horror about the violent raids on monasteries and towns. But the Vikings were more than wild barbarians from the north. They were shrewd traders, excellent navigators, and superb craftsmen and shipbuilders.<sup>644</sup>

From late in the 8th century, Vikings raided, traded, and explored far and wide. They discovered Iceland in 870 and sailed farther west to Greenland in about 985 (pp. 20–21). Leif the Lucky was probably the first European to set foot in North America. He is thought to have landed in **Newfoundland, Canada, in around 1001**. Vikings sailed east over the Baltic Sea and continued up rivers into Russia. They went on overland as far as the cities of Constantinople (now Istanbul) and Jerusalem. Other Vikings sailed around the west coast of Europe and into the Mediterranean Sea. Thanks to their ships and seafaring skills, they could take people completely by surprise.<sup>645</sup>

Ivar the Boneless and his army invaded England in 869. (...) Ivar and his men terrorized the country and killed King Edmund.<sup>646</sup>

The Normans were descended from Vikings who settled in Normandy, France (p. 16). The Bayeux Tapestry describes

<sup>644</sup> Susan M. Margeson, *Vikings*, (New York: Dorling Kindersley, Eyewitness Guides, 2010), p. 6.

<sup>645</sup> ibid, p. 6.

<sup>646</sup> ibid, p. 7.

**their conquest of England in 1066.** In this scene, the proud ship of the **Norman leader, William the Conqueror**, sails toward England. A lookout in the stern blows a horn, while the steersman holds the tiller, attached to the steering oar. The ship has an animal-head prow, and shields line its sides.<sup>647</sup>

### ▪ **Viking Warriors**

The True Spirit of the Viking Age was daring courage. To the Viking warrior, **honor and glory in battle** were the only things that lasted forever. A warrior had to be ready to follow his lord or king into battle or on a raid or expedition. (...) In the later Viking Age, kings had the power to raise a force (or leithang) of ships, men, supplies, and weapons. The kingdom was divided into small units, and each unit provided one warrior. Groups of units donated a ship to carry the warriors on a raid to faraway lands.<sup>648</sup>

Vikings usually fought on foot. Fashions changed in the late 11th century, at the end of the Viking Age, when cavalry began to be used in battle.<sup>649</sup>

### ▪ **Terrorizing the West**

Originally, the Vikings had been a terror for the West. It was after 1500 AD that the expeditions started taking the shape of exploration and colonization in the world. It has been reported about the Vikings that:

The Vikings swept into western Europe, terrorizing towns along the coast, plundering churches and grabbing riches, slaves, and land. **The first dated raid, on the famous monastery of Lindisfarne, England, in 793, shocked the whole Christian world.** From then on, attacks all over Europe intensified. Bands of Viking warriors roamed the North Sea and the English Channel, raiding choice targets almost at will. Soon the Vikings were venturing farther inland. They sailed up the great rivers of Europe—the Rhine, Seine, Rhone, and Loire—and even overran Paris, France. The raiders began to spend the winters in areas they had captured. Then they set up bases to attack other targets. The Vikings often demanded huge payments for leaving an area in peace. Some warriors spent many years raiding. Björn Jarnsitha and his

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<sup>647</sup> ibid, p. 10.

<sup>648</sup> ibid, p. 12.

<sup>649</sup> ibid, p. 13.

companion **Hasting spent three years with 62 ships in Spain, North Africa, France, and Italy.** They lost a lot of their treasure in storms on the way home.<sup>650</sup>

Paris was conquered on Easter Sunday, March 28, 845. Charles the Bald, the French king, had to pay the raiders 7,000 lb (3,150 kg) of silver to get peace. The Viking leader Ragnar even took a bar from the city gate as a souvenir. But he and most of his men died of disease on their way back to Scandinavia.<sup>651</sup>

Lindisfarne is a small island off the east coast of England. The celebrated monastery there was destroyed by Vikings in 793. These warriors carved on a stone from the island may well be the Viking raiders. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a contemporary English historical record, reported: "The ravages of heathen men miserably destroyed God's church on Lindisfarne, with plunder and slaughter."<sup>652</sup>

King Edmund was king of East Anglia in England in 869. This 12th-century manuscript shows him being beaten by Vikings. Then they tied him to a tree and shot him full of arrows. Edmund still refused to give up his belief in Christ, so they cut off his head. The Vikings later settled in East Anglia under their leader King Guthrum.<sup>653</sup>

In 1012, Archbishop Alphege of Canterbury was seized by Vikings who were raiding the English countryside.<sup>654</sup> They were angry because the English King Ethelred had not paid them quickly enough. Alphege refused to be ransomed. The Vikings, who were drunk, pelted him with bones and cattle skulls. He was finally killed with a battle ax.<sup>655</sup>

#### ▪ ***East into Russia***

To cross into Russia, Viking warriors and traders sailed up various rivers such as the Dvina, Lovat, and Vistula in Poland. Then they had to drag their boats across land before they reached the headwaters of the Dniepr, Dniester, and Volga rivers and followed them south to the Black and Caspian seas. From there, the great cities of Constantinople (heart of the Byzantine empire) and Baghdad (capital of the Islamic Caliphate) were within reach. The history of Viking raids in the

<sup>650</sup> ibid, p. 16.

<sup>651</sup> ibid, p. 16.

<sup>652</sup> ibid, p. 16.

<sup>653</sup> ibid, p. 17.

<sup>654</sup> It is, therefore, easy to comprehend that the same Viking leaders along with the chivalrous knights of Europe were diverted to form part of the crusaders to plunder the rich Muslim lands and to create their own dukedoms there.

<sup>655</sup> Margeson, *Vikings*, p. 17.

east is not as well recorded as in western Europe. In about 860, a group of Swedish Vikings under Rurik settled at Novgorod. After Rurik's death, Oleg captured the town of Kiev. He established an empire called Kievan Rus, which would later give rise to the medieval czardom of Russia.<sup>656</sup>

Most of the Vikings who traveled to Russia and the east were Swedish. **Of more than 85,000 Arab coins found in Scandinavia, 80,000 were found in Sweden.** Many 11<sup>th</sup> century Swedish rune stones tell of voyages to the south and east. They record the deaths of travelers in Russia, Greece, the Byzantine Empire, and even Muslim lands. Most Viking settlements were temporary trading stations. Others, like Kiev and Novgorod, were more permanent. A sign of this is that women lived there, too.<sup>657</sup>

The Russian rivers were full of rocks and rapids. The Vikings dragged or carried their light boats around these dangers. Not everyone made it. Swedish memorial stones record the deaths of many travelers in Russia and lands beyond.<sup>658</sup>

**In the east, Vikings were called Rus by the local people. This is probably where the word Russia comes from.** Arab writers describe Viking traders armed with swords and carrying furs of black fox and beaver. The Arab Ibn Fadhan (pp. 47, 55) said the Rus he met in 922 were "**the filthiest of God's creatures.**"<sup>659</sup> He noted with disgust that they all washed in the same bowl of water, rinsing their hair, blowing their noses, and spitting in it before passing it on to someone else!<sup>660</sup>

### ▪ ***Discovering New Lands***

The Vikings had actually been the forerunners of the colonists in the West. Here are certain excerpts from Margeson describing discoveries and earliest settlements in their colonies.

The Vikings were daring explorers. In search of new land, they sailed their slender ships into the frozen, uncharted waters of the North Atlantic. Most of the explorers came from Norway,

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<sup>656</sup> ibid, p. 18.

<sup>657</sup> ibid, p. 18.

<sup>658</sup> ibid, p. 19.

<sup>659</sup> From this, we can evaluate the pride of superior civilization of the West during the medieval ages and before.

<sup>660</sup> Margeson, *Vikings*, p. 19.

where the valleys were crowded and farmland was scarce. They discovered the Faroe Islands and Iceland, as well as far-off Greenland and the land they called **Vinland (North America)**. As reports of these exciting discoveries got back to Scandinavia, ships full of eager settlers set sail. Between 870 and 930, for example, more than 10,000 Vikings arrived in Iceland. They found empty spaces, wild forests, and seas teeming with fish. The sea voyages were long and dangerous, and many ships sank in storms. But the urge to travel to new lands remained strong.<sup>661</sup>

A man named Gunnbjörn found Greenland after his ship was blown off course in a storm. The huge island was explored in 984 and 985 by **Erik the Red**, a chief who had been accused of murder and forced to leave Iceland. Erik encouraged hundreds of Icelanders to settle in Greenland.<sup>662</sup>

Iceland is a volcanic island that was first colonized in 870. In good weather it took seven days to get there from Norway. The first settler was Ingolf, from Sunnfjord, Norway. He built a large farm on a bay overlooking the sea. This later became the capital, Reykjavik. The settlers raised sheep and used local iron and soapstone to make weapons and cooking pots. Soon they were exporting these natural resources, along with woolen and linen cloth.<sup>663</sup>

Leif the Lucky, Erik the Red's son, explored land in North America during a trip from Greenland (another account says that Bjarni Herjolfsson reached the coastline a few years before). **Around 1001, Leif became the first European to set foot in North America, probably in Newfoundland, Canada. He called it Vinland (Wine Land)**, perhaps mistaking the big huckleberries he saw for red grapes. The Vikings also discovered Markland (Wood Land) and Helluland (Rock Land). These may be Labrador and Baffin Island to the north.<sup>664</sup>

Most of this inhospitable island is covered in ice and snow. Erik the Red called it Greenland to encourage people to move there. The Vikings established two settlements, the eastern and western settlements, in the only areas where the land could be farmed. They built their farms on the edges of fjords, often far inland. They farmed sheep and cattle, but depended mainly on caribou and seals for food.<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> ibid, p. 20.

<sup>662</sup> ibid, p. 20.

<sup>663</sup> ibid, p. 20.

<sup>664</sup> ibid, p. 21.

<sup>665</sup> ibid, p. 21.

## ▪ **Vikings as Traders**

It has been recorded that:

The Vikings were great traders who traveled far beyond Scandinavia buying and selling goods. The riches of the north included lumber for shipbuilding; iron for making tools and weapons; furs for warm clothing; skins from whales and seals for ship ropes; and whalebones and walrus ivory for carving. These were carried to far-flung places and exchanged for local goods. The traders returned from Britain with wheat, silver, and cloth, and brought wine, salt, pottery, and gold back from the Mediterranean. They sailed across the Baltic Sea and upriver into Russia, then continued on foot or camel as far as the cities of Constantinople (now Istanbul) and Jerusalem. In markets all along the way, they haggled over the price of glass, exotic spices, silks, and slaves. Markets and towns grew as centers for trade. Big Viking market towns included Birka in Sweden, Kaupang in Norway, Hedeby in Germany (at the time in Denmark), York in England, Dublin in Ireland, and Kiev in Ukraine.<sup>666</sup>

## ▪ **Vikings and Slavery**

Mr. Margeson has reported that:

Viking society had three classes —slaves, freemen, and nobles. Most of the hard labor was done by slaves, or thralls. Many were foreigners captured in war. Wealthy people sometimes had their slaves killed and buried with them. Slaves could be freed. Freemen included farmers, traders, craftsmen, warriors, and big landowners. At the beginning of the Viking Age, there were many local chieftains (nobles) who ruled over small areas. They were subject to the rule of the Thing, the local assembly where all freemen could voice their opinions and complain about others. But chieftains and kings gradually increased their wealth and power by raiding and conquering foreign lands. By the end of the Viking Age, around 1050, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden were each ruled by a single, powerful king, and the role of the Things had declined.<sup>667</sup>

Much of Scandinavia is rugged and mountainous. The large forests, lakes, and marshes make traveling difficult, especially in bad weather. Vikings went everywhere they could by ship. Traveling overland was often easiest in winter, when snow

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<sup>666</sup> ibid, p. 26.

<sup>667</sup> ibid, p. 28.

covered uneven ground and the many rivers and lakes froze over.<sup>668</sup>

Scandinavia was surrounded by Christian countries. In the late 10th century, Viking kings started supporting missionaries from England and Germany, because they saw Christianity as a way to strengthen their power. Denmark was converted under King Harald Bluetooth in the 960s. Norway followed early in the 11th century. In Sweden, traditional beliefs survived until the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. **By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Viking raids had ended.** The Scandinavian countries united under strong kings who did not encourage the kind of raiding in which the Vikings had once indulged. Meanwhile, the countries that had been the subject of Viking attacks, such as France and England, themselves became more united. The Vikings gradually disappeared from the scene.<sup>669</sup>

King Olaf Haraldsson turned Norway into a Christian country in around 1024, completing the work of his predecessor, Olaf Tryggvason. **The old temples were destroyed and people were forced to convert to the new religion.**<sup>670</sup>

### ▪ ***Chivalry***

Chivalry means 'horsemanship'. The French word 'Chevalir' means a man of aristocratic standing and probably of noble ancestry who is capable if called upon of equipping himself with a warhorse and the arms of heavy cavalryman and who has been through certain rituals that make him what he is. Chivalry was, therefore, defined as a way of life in which three essential aspects fused together: the military, the nobility, the religion. Subsequently, some chivalrous knights came to be known as knights of Christ. The classification of such knights was defined into three classes. The first one entailed duties to countrymen and fellow Christians: this contains virtues such as mercy, courage, valour, fairness, protection of the weak and the poor, and in the servant-hood of the knight to his lord. This also brings with it the idea of being willing to give one's life for another's; whether he would be giving his life for a poor man or his lord.

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<sup>668</sup> ibid, p. 40.

<sup>669</sup> ibid, p. 62.

<sup>670</sup> ibid, p. 62.

Keeping in view the above, the Christian knights among the crusaders were expected to be observants of the morals and the law of war. Alas! They brutally violated all essentials of chivalry.

#### ▪ ***The Influence of the Moors on Chivalry***

From the 12<sup>th</sup> century onward chivalry came to be understood as a moral, religious and social code of knightly conduct. **Medieval Europe particularly Spanish poets were greatly influenced by Arabic literature of chivalry, bravery, figurative expressions and imagery.** The famous Spanish author Vicente Blasco says:

Europe did not know chivalry, or its adopted literature or sense of honour before the arrival of Arabs in Andalusia and the wide presence of their knights and heroes in the countries of the south.<sup>671</sup>

Henry Maro says:

The Arab impact on the civilization of the Roman peoples did not stop at fine arts only, but extended to music and poetry as well.<sup>672</sup>

The Wikipedia, therefore, records that the medieval courtly literature glorifies the valor, tactics and ideals of both moors and ancient Romans.<sup>673</sup>

Towards the late Middle Ages with the development of Mariology, the Christian knights started developing another specific form of chivalry which was primarily influenced by Mariology but being connected with romanticism, they started eulogizing and worshiping certain ladies of high nobility. Knights in Europe developed generous feelings for ladies. They took on them to defend ladies who needed their aid. The ladies or women were at the centre of their chivalric acts. Women were always regarded as incentives to valor. **Knights were very often servants of ladies.** Love and obedience to the ladies was the aim of their life. A

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<sup>671</sup> Wikipedia 'Chivalry'.

<sup>672</sup> ibid.'

<sup>673</sup> ibid.

passage from Charles Mills may help us understand the central importance of the lady love as incentive to chivalry.

Chivalric love took delight in reconciling and joining the opposites of the world. It was no cold and calculating principle it abrogated the distinctions of wealth and rank, and many a knight, whose whole fortune lay in his prowess, gained the hand of high-born beauty. "How can I hope," observed a young candidate for chivalry to a lady of high estate, "how can I hope to find a damsel of noble birth, who will return the affection of a knight that, ungraced by rank, has only his good sword to trust to?" — "And why should you not find her?" replied the lady; "are you not gently born? are you not a handsome youth? have you not eyes to gaze on her, ears to hear her, feet to move at her will, body and heart to accomplish loyally her commands? and, possessed of these qualities, can you doubt to adventure yourself in the service of a lady, however exalted her rank ?<sup>674</sup>

As against the above, Islam advocates wholehearted love for God with utmost veneration and obedience to His commandments. Since all human beings have been created by the Almighty, therefore, all of them deserve our love for the sake of the Lord. We need to be compassionate towards all of them without any distinction between them. Love of the believers must extend to all males, females, young or old, children or youths, rich or poor, black or white, speaking any language whatsoever and belonging to any region in the world. All who are creatures of God need to be loved for the sake of God who is the centre of our love. A believer's eyes must, therefore, be set on the mercy and acceptance by the Lord. His feet must move in service of the Lord to please Him. His body and heart must aim at accomplishing loyally the commandments of the Almighty. All services and chivalry should, therefore, be directed only towards pleasing Him. Those who give priority to any other purpose than pleasing the Lord cannot claim themselves to be true Muslims.

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<sup>674</sup> Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry* (London: A&R Spottiswoode, New Street Square, 1825), p. 218.

## The Rising Storm

### ▪ ***The Etymology and Essence of Crusades***

The term Crusade was originally coined to denote any of the series of the Medieval military expeditions made by Europeans to recover the holy land from the Muslims. In practice, however, It signified any energetic organized campaign marked by cross with an economic, political, social or religious aim. The term crusade, therefore, could be applied to all the enthusiastic efforts undertaken by the western Christendom against the non-Christians to usurp the lands, the wealth and power or to avenge themselves of any loss caused or pretended to be caused by other people in the world.

Traditionally, the Christians count nine major crusades against the Muslims and the Arabs. Actually there had been many different waves of fanatic Christian knights and other contingents even during the first few crusades that embarked on the mission of destroying Islamism or to seek good fortune in the Muslim lands which according to the preachers were 'flowing with honey and milk'. The afore-stated exhortation of Ecclesia, therefore, suggested new channels of glory and plunder to the vanishing heroism of the Vikings and also chivalry of the hundreds of thousands of knights in Europe. The 9 crusades covered the period from 1096 A.D. to 1272 A.D.

The first crusades comprising several waves of crusaders were undertaken during 1095 to 1099. The second covered 1147 to 1149, the third 1189 to 1192 the fourth 1202 to 1204, the fifth 1217 to 1221, the sixth 1228 to 1229, the seventh 1248 to 1254, the eighth 1270 and the ninth 1271 to 1272. Although, there had been no numbering of the crusades after 1272 AD yet the crusades always continued under one title or the other. Prominent among them were the severe persecution and **mass murder of the Jews in Spain from 1492 to 1500 AD. About four centuries later about half a million Jews were killed during Russian Pogroms**

**(1881-1884 & 1903-1906).** In 1939, there were 3,474,000 Jews in Poland. About 2,700,000 were killed at the German Nazi extermination camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Belzec, Sobibór, Chełmno or died of starvation in ghettos. Different sources have given their own estimates of the total number of Jews killed during the period of the Second World War in the Christian West. Anyhow, most of the writers quote the figure of 6,000,000 Jews killed during the Second World War the estimate of which they attribute to Eichman, a senior SS official.<sup>675</sup>

#### ▪ ***Background of the Crusades***

As a background to the Crusades, we need to refresh ourselves with certain historical facts preceding the crusades. After suffering a prolonged period of decline, the Western Roman Empire had fallen in about 480 AD. The Empire, thereafter, stood divided into various national or provincial units controlled by different kings, dukes, princes, counts, barons and the knights. As such, the Empire stood fragmented into numerous small units which sprang from the ruins of the Roman Empire in most of the parts of Europe. Consequent upon fall of the Western Empire, the Eastern Empire with its capital at Constantinople took over the control of almost all the territories ruled by the Western Empire on the Eastern and southern sides of the Mediterranean Sea while some parts of the former empire in Europe had also been reconquered by them.

During the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, however, there occurred a great change in the world with the advent of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) had born at Makkah in 570 AD and he started his mission as a prophet in about 610 AD. He died at Medina in 632 AD. By that time, most of the Arabs had joined Islam and in about 638 AD the Muslims had taken over from the Byzantines the city of Jerusalem and a vast territory in the Holy Land. Subsequently, they deprived them of all their strong holds on the south as well as

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<sup>675</sup> Wikipedia 'Holocaust'.

East of Mediterranean Sea. The Umayyads had allowed their General Tariq Bin Zyad to enter into Hispania in 711 AD. He conquered most of the lands in Spain up to 718 when Sulayman bin Abd al Aziz the Umayyad Caliph withdrew him from the command and called him to Damascus to account for his violation of the orders of the Caliph. Similarly, Musa bin Nusair the senior of Tariq had also been called back for the same reason.

Even during the absence of the celebrated generals, the Muslim hosts continued their advance and within 10 years of their entry into Spain, they not only occupied entire Spain but also advanced up to Toulouse in France. By that time, (720 AD) i.e. within 90 years after the death of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) the Umayyad Caliphate had extended over an area of 11 million km<sup>2</sup>.

**As such, they had attained almost double the size of the combined Roman Empire i.e. 6.5 million km<sup>2</sup> at its peak in 117 AD.** The Umayyad Caliphate, therefore, covered a territory larger than that of Europe including Ireland, British Isles, Iceland, Nova Zembla archipelago, Svalbard and Jan Mayen etc. totaling 10.18 million km<sup>2</sup>.

At Taolouse, the Muslims had to suffer a defeat at the hand of Charles Martel (686-741 AD) of France in 721 AD. Although the Christians ascribe the success to the great valor and prowess of Charles Martel yet the real cause of Muslim defeat had been the low morale of the Army due to withdrawal of their ablest generals from the field and lack of the supplies or reinforcements from the Caliphate which insisted on consolidation than any further advance in Europe. Even the later circumstances did not lend any support to the Muslims in Spain. With the change of the caliphate from Umayyads to the Abbasids at Damascus in 750 AD, the Abbasids had assassinated all the survivors of the Umayyad ruling dynasty at Baghdad. Abdurrahman al-Nasir was the only mentionable survivor to escape towards Spain where he inaugurated the Umayyad caliphate. Consequently, the Abbasids at Baghdad had been more friendly towards

the Christian rulers like Charlemagne than the Umayyad caliph in Spain.

Europe, too, did not have any ideal strategic environments to expel the Muslims from Spain. Except for a pause of about 37 years during the reigns of Charles Martel (718-741 AD) and Charlemagne (800-814 AD) Europe remained deprived of power or effectiveness in the world politics. From the perspective of overall view, however, Europe had been passing through the dark ages<sup>676</sup> since the fall of Rome to the beginning of the renaissance.

The conquest of Constantinople had been the cherished desire of the Muslims since the life time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). The Muslim Armies had seized almost all the possessions of the Byzantines on the southern as well as Eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. Subsequently, they even besieged Constantinople twice i.e. during 674-678 and 717-718 but failed to capture the city. Even, thereafter, Muslims had never been forgetful to fulfill the prediction of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to conquer Constantinople while the Christians too had been aware of the designs of the Muslims. Continual struggle between the opposing forces in and around the Mediterranean, thereafter, had been increasing embitterment between the Christians and the Muslims. Due to their own shortcomings at home, however, the Christian powers in the west had been hesitant to attempt any expedition towards the Muslim East. Most of them were involved in their internal politics leading to sporadic expeditions against each other. Mutual civil wars, therefore, did not allow them to take any united action in the East.

**As regards the Muslims in Spain, they reached at the peak of power under Muhammad bin Abdullah ibn Abi Aamir, al-Hajib al-Mansur (c. 938-1002).** According to certain writers, al-Mansur had ruled al-

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<sup>676</sup> According to some of the scholars, the term refers to the early middle ages i.e. 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. while the others believe that it extended to 13<sup>th</sup> century or till the rise of the Italian renaissance in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Andalus with an Iron hand but soon after his death, there occurred a continued process of decline and disintegration of the Islamic Spain. From 1010 to 1035 AD, the Muslim Spain had been fragmented into 24 different states.<sup>677</sup> Internal civil wars ensuing from disintegration made the smaller and weaker Muslim States vulnerable to Christian monarchs in their vicinity. The Christians, therefore, seized certain regions that had been under the Islamic rule for centuries.

Yusuf bin Tashfin (r. 1061-1106 AD) leader of the Moroccan Almoravid Empire established the Murabitoon dynasty in Morocco in 1062 AD. **Toledo, the largest Andalusian state had then been ruled by the Muslim al-Taifas of al-Andalusia. Due to decadence of Al-Murabitoon power in Spain, Alfonso VI seized Toledo from them in 1085.** Al-Mutamid, the last sovereign king of Taifah at Seville in Andalusia, in jeopardy of being taken by the stronger kingdom of Castile/Leon requested Yusuf bin Tashfin for help. On October 23, 1086 AD, the Almuravid forces defeated the largest Christian army assembled in Andalusia up to that time. Yusuf then had to return to Morocco due to the death of his heir. He, however, had been returning to Andalusia whenever he found the Muslim rulers in trouble. In about 1094 AD, the Christian forces led by El-CID conquered Valencia from the Muslims. On August 15, 1097, the Almuravids delivered a blow to Alfonso's forces in a battle in which Al-CID's son was killed. **Ultimately, Yusuf bin Tashfin took Valencia back from the Christians in 1102 AD when he himself had attained 96 years of his age.** Besides reconquering most of the Islamic al-Andalusia the Almurabitoon succeeded to keep the Christians at bay for a long time.

Political conditions in Europe had started taking a turn in favor of the Christians in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Otto I, also known as Otto the Great, formed the Holy Roman

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<sup>677</sup> For details please refer to p. 89 of *Historical Atlas of Islamic World* by David Nicolle.

Empire at Germany w.e.f 962 AD. Luckily, there also occurred much consolidation in the kingdoms of France, England and Italy as reported in the following:

At the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the great kingdoms of medieval Europe were assuming a definite shape. (...)

In Spain the Christian kingdoms were growing daily at the expense of the decaying Caliphate of Cordova. In other lands the crown of Lombardy already was, and that of Burgundy soon was to be, annexed to the German realm. For the kingdom of the Eastern Franks had now, through the vigour of the three Ottos, entered on its more distinctively German phase. Yet further, the German kings had made good their claim to the imperial title also, and from the days of Otto I., it was the chief ambition of almost every German king to be crowned Emperor of the Romans; that ambition was destined to be fatal to German kingship, but in the tenth century it yet seemed that the union of the imperial and royal offices would bring strength to both.<sup>678</sup>

The consolidation of Europe against the declining caliphate at Baghdad was, therefore, a vantage point for the Christians to divert their combined military might to the east to attain their long cherished goals. They had been carefully watching the Events in the Muslim world. By the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century the caliphate at Baghdad had lost its vigor and authority over the Muslims world. This was the period when a radical Shiite movement or a revolutionary Ismaeli branch of Islam gained power in the northern Arabia. In the year 900 AD, one Hamdan Qarmat of Bahrayn in north eastern Arabia rebelled against the Muslim Caliphate at Baghdad. He soon dominated most of Arabia including Oman by raiding deep inside Iraq, Syria and even Egypt. The Hamdanids captured Basra, Damascus and Jerusalem in 901 AD and Antioch in 903 AD while Kufa in 906 AD. Obtaining control on the entire Arabian Peninsula except for Hejaz and Yemen, the Hamdanids continued to massacre and prevent the pilgrims to Kaaba from 907 to 920. In 930, they attacked Makkah and carried off *Hajr-e-Aswad* (the sacred black stone) to Bahrayn which remained with them for the next 20 years.

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<sup>678</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 13-14.

The Fatimids i.e. Ismaeli Shia community also had started gaining power in northern Africa w.e.f 909 AD. In due course, extending their conquests up to Palestine and Syria they established their caliphate at Cairo in 973 AD. The Umayyad Andalus already had long history of detachment from the Abbasid Caliphate at Baghdad. In about 929 AD, the ruler of al-Andalus himself assumed Title of Caliph. **This was, therefore, the first time in the Muslim History that they had three rival dynasties of Caliphs.** Although Al-Andalus had no occasion of confrontation with Baghdad yet they also stood deprived of any support from the centre. As regards the Fatimid Shiite Caliphate, it posed great challenge to Abbasid Sunni Caliphate at Baghdad. The ever-increasing schism and struggle for power between the Sunnis and the Shiites was, therefore, leading to overall weakness of the Muslim *Ummah*. The caliphate at Baghdad was tending towards dissolution and disintegration into different small or large Sultanates in Syria, Anatolia and Iran. In spite of their nominal allegiance to Baghdad, the sultans, the Emirs and the provincial heads started pursuing their own ends. Mutual wars between the Muslim Emirs and sultans, therefore, caused much erosion in the military might of the Muslim Ummah.

As against the fragmentation and disunity in the Muslim World there had been positive changes in the Christian West. In consonance with the Hamdanids and the Fatimids efforts to destroy the central authority of Islam, the Christian West and especially, the Byzantines had started pressing hard on the Muslims. The Byzantines reoccupied Arz-e-Rome in 928 AD, Malatya 934 AD, Cyprus 964 AD, Tarsus 965 AD and Antioch 969 AD. Other Christian powers were also moving in league with the Byzantines. Sylvester II (999-1003 AD) was, perhaps, the first pope to rise to the occasion for a joint action against the Muslims but his efforts failed to be fruitful. In response to his call, only the city of Pisa roused to Arms but the expedition being very small failed to gain anything substantial against the Muslims.

The Italians sacked Corsica and Sardinia in the Mediterranean in 1034 AD. Uncertainties, however, prevailed during the next four decades due to Seljuk's fighting against the Byzantine armies in Syria and Anatolia. Eventually, the decisive defeat of the Byzantine Emperor Romanos IV at the battle of Manzikert in Asia Minor in 1071 shattered the Christian plans to invade the Muslim territories.

#### ▪ **Battle of Muzikert**

In a decisive defeat to the armies of Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes on August 26, 1071 A.D, the Seljuk Turks under the command of Sultan Alp Arsalan took the emperor as a captive of war. He was the second sultan of Seljuk Empire (r. 1063-1072 AD). In acknowledgement of his military prowess, personal valor and fighting skills, he was awarded the title Alp Arslan which in Turkish meant 'Heroic Lion'. Besides many other battles, he won great fame in the battle of Manzikert where he defeated and captured Emperor Romanos IV of Constantinople.

A western writer has described the battle of Manzikert in the following words:

Historian Thomas Asbridge says: "In 1071, the Seljuqs crushed an imperial army at the Battle of Manzikert (in eastern Asia Minor), and though historians no longer consider this to have been an utterly cataclysmic reversal for the Greeks, it still was a stinging setback." **It was the first time in history a Byzantine Emperor had become the prisoner of a Muslim commander.**<sup>679</sup>

Although after paying a meager amount as ransom and with generous concessions from Sultan Alp Arsalan, the Emperor Romanos obtained his release from the Seljuks just after a week's detainment yet when he returned to Constantinople, he had to confront with serious troubles. He was defeated three times in battles against Douka's family and was deposed, blinded, and exiled to the island of Proti. Romanos died soon after the exile due to infection caused by an injury during his brutal

<sup>679</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Battle of Manzikert.

blinding.<sup>680</sup> After his death, there had been many intrigues for the throne at Constantinople. The defeat at Manzikert, therefore, had a long lasting impact on the Byzantine politics as well as the Empire as stated below:

The result of this disastrous defeat was, in simplest terms, the loss of the Eastern Roman Empire's Anatolian heartland. John Julius Norwich says in his trilogy on the Byzantine Empire that the defeat was "its death blow, though centuries remained before the remnant fell. The themes in Anatolia were literally the heart of the empire, and within decades after Manzikert, they were gone." In his smaller book, *A Short History of Byzantium*, Norwich describes the battle as "**the greatest disaster suffered by the Empire in its seven and a half centuries of existence**". Sir Steven Runciman, in his *History of the Crusades*, noted that "**The Battle of Manzikert was the most decisive disaster in Byzantine history.** The Byzantines themselves had no illusions about it. Again and again their historians refer to that dreadful day."

Anna Komnene, writing a few decades after the actual battle, wrote:

...the fortunes of the Roman Empire had sunk to their lowest ebb. For the armies of the East were dispersed in all directions, because the Turks had over-spread, and gained command of, countries between the Euxine Sea [Black Sea] and the Hellespont, and the Aegean Sea and Syrian Seas [Mediterranean Sea], and the various bays, especially those which wash Pamphylia, Cilicia, and empty themselves into the Egyptian Sea [Mediterranean Sea].<sup>681</sup>

The emperor at Constantinople and all the kings as well as the clergy in Europe were at great pain to avert future attacks of the Seljuk Turks at Constantinople and other territories in Europe. They, therefore, started making earnest efforts not only to defend themselves but also to arrange some offensive action to stop the tide of the Muslims towards the Christian West.

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<sup>680</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Battle of Manzikert.

<sup>681</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Battle of Manzikert.

The first positive move in favor of Christians after the battle of Manzikert was the capture of Toledo the largest Andalusian state by Christian King Alfonzo IV from the Muslims in 1085 AD. Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085 AD) tried to annex the eastern and the Western Churches for the joint venture but only 50,000 people agreed to march to the sepulcher. Even in the adverse circumstances, the Norman adventurers from southern **Italy made good use of their naval forces to capture Sicily, Malta and Sardinia in 1090 AD.** The naval forces of the west, therefore, stood fully prepared to launch a powerful attack on the Muslim East. They, however, stood scared of Malik Shah Seljuk. The Pope, the Ecclesia and the emperor in the East were finding themselves helpless in the presence of Malik Shah the illustrious son and successor of Alp Arslan. Besides Malik Shah, they had another formidable foe i.e. Nizam al-Mulk Toosi the most capable general, administrator, scholar, writer, reformer and energetic Vizir of Malik Shah. Nizam al-Mulk had actually been the backbone of both Alp Arslan and his son Malik Shah to establish a strong, well organized and judicious Sultanate of the Seljuks. It was, perhaps, due to sheer good luck or some contrivance from the Christian powers that Nizam al-Mulk Toosi was assassinated on 14 Oct 1092. This was followed by the death of Malik Shah himself through poison on 19 November 1092 AD.

The death of the Sultan and the Vizir within 36 days was a sudden and unexpected disastrous blow for the Muslims in the East. Among the suspects was the caliph at Baghdad or Terken Khatoon, the wife of Malik Shah. Many other rivals were among the suspects. Some sagacious people, however, could clearly, identify continuous intrigue of Eastern Roman Empire in collusion with the Pope to eliminate their enemies like Alp Arslan, Malik Shah Saljuk and Nizam al-Mulk Toosi. There had been series of unnatural deaths of Muslim heroes in addition to the illustrious personalities mentioned above which hint at Christian contrivance or miracles. Some internal rivalries of Muslims themselves also cannot be

over-ruled. The end result of the death of Malik Shah was division of his realm among his sons, governors and some other emirs in Asia. This was, therefore, the long awaited moment for the Byzantines as well as the Western Christendom to assail the lands under the enfeebled caliph of Baghdad, small units held by the sons of Malik Shah I, the Fatimid Caliph of Cairo and other Emirs in Anatolia, Syria and Palestine. Even so the Christendom was reluctant to proceed for achievement of their goal simply due to a history of schism prevailing between the papacy at Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Church at Constantinople. The trust deficit between them had been continuing and the emperor in the east had also been loath to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope or to seek help from the Western Christendom.

In spite of being averse to the concept of paying homage to the Pope or to seek refuge under the Western Powers, Alexios I Komnenos (b. 1056, d. 1118) the emperor at Constantinople felt himself allured to reap full advantage from adversity of the Muslims caused by the fragmentation of the Muslim Caliphate and also the deaths of the most effective ruler and administrator among them. In March, 1095, therefore, Alexius I sent an ambassador to Pope Urban II asking for help against the Muslims. With the burning desire of punishing the Seljuks and reoccupation of the territories lost to them, Alexios resorted to make much of the barbarity of the Seljuk Turks. The Pope too found it an opportune moment to unite the European powers under his banners to assert his supremacy over all the despots in the Christian West. Besides this, the pope also hoped to augment his wealth by conquering the Muslim lands in Asia.



# PROPAGATION AND THE INVASIONS

## Propagation of the Crusades

In response to the letter from the Emperor Alexius of Constantinople the Pope called a great council at the city of Clermont which lasted from 18<sup>the</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1095. It was attended nearly by 300 clerics, many knights and people from France and other countries. The Pope summoned the attending nobility and the people, to wrest the Holy Land and eastern churches from the control of the Egyptians and the inheritors of the Seljuks. Mills records that:

When he solemnly commanded a Crusade against the "Infidels who were in possession of Christ's Sepulchre, and **promised a remission of sins to those who joined it, and paradise**<sup>682</sup> to those who fell in battle, his excited auditors shouted in various idioms, Deus vult! Deus lo vult! Dieux le volt!" God wills it, God wills it!" Yes, exclaimed the Pope.<sup>683</sup>

Gibbon's report also corroborates with the same:

"It is indeed the will of God; and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be forever adopted as your cry of battle, to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His cross is the symbol of your salvation; wear it, **a red, a bloody cross**, as an external mark, on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement."<sup>684</sup>

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<sup>682</sup> It is worth noting here that instead of the Almighty, the pope had the prerogative to remit sins and to grant the paradise to whomsoever he pleased. This obvious usurpation had left the Lord God (the Father) bereft of all powers that had traditionally been the essential attribute of His sovereignty.

<sup>683</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 320.

<sup>684</sup> Edward Gibbon, History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. 7, p. 218-219.

In addition to the above, the pope also quoted the words of Jesus as recorded in Mathew and Luke '*He that taketh not his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.*'<sup>685</sup>

It is pertinent to note here that Jesus made only an allegorical reference to carrying the cross meaning a firm resolve to face all types of troubles and tortures in the way of the Lord. Jesus neither bade his followers to carry the actual cross of metal or wood etc. nor did any of his followers follow him physically carrying a cross on his shoulder. As regards the disciples, "*they all forsook him, and fled*".<sup>686</sup> Peter too had denied Jesus vehemently.<sup>687</sup> Even Jesus himself did not carry his cross on his way to crucifixion. It was Simon "A Cyrenian, who was compelled by the Roman soldiers to bear the cross of Jesus (Mt 27:32, Mk 15:21, Lk 23:26). He is described by St. Mark as the father of ALEXANDER and RUFUS, names evidently well known in the early Christian Church. The story in the Gospels was perverted by some of the Docetic sects, the Basilidians going the length of maintaining that Simon not only bore the cross, but was actually crucified in mistake for Jesus."

<sup>688</sup>

According to some Gnostic traditions, Simon of Cyrene, by mistaken identity, suffered the events leading up to the crucifixion, and died on the cross instead of Jesus. This is the story presented in the Second Treatise of the Great Seth, although it is unclear whether Simon or another actually died on the cross. This is part of a belief held by some Gnostics that Jesus was not of flesh, but only took on the appearance of flesh.<sup>689</sup>

Simon was coming from country to the city when the Roman soldiers forced him to carry the cross. He was neither a follower of Jesus Christ nor had any affiliation with him. Crucifixion was the method '*to make death in the highest degree terrible and miserable (...) a painful, shameful cursed death, it was so miserable death that merciful princes appointed those who were condemned*

<sup>685</sup> Mat 10:38, Luk 14:27.

<sup>686</sup> Mark 14:50, Mat 26:56.

<sup>687</sup> Mark 14:66-72, Luk 22:56-62, John 18:15-18, 25:27.

<sup>688</sup> James Hastings, *A Dic. Of the Bible*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), Vol. IV, p. 519-520.

<sup>689</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Simon of Cyrene.

*to it by the law to be strangled first and then nailed to the cross so Julius Caesar did by some pirates.*<sup>690</sup> St. John was the only evangelist who said:

**16.** Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. **17.** And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.<sup>691</sup>

The Gospel ascribed to John is the latest among the Gospels written perhaps by a school of thought almost a century after the death of Jesus Christ. Due to its late compilation and wide difference from the Synoptic Gospels, the earlier Christians had many doubts about it. Many scholars take it as merely an appendage to the epistles of St. Paul.

The cross represented a sign of terror and oppression centuries before the birth of Jesus. The Romans used it as the symbol of their supremacy and a display of torturous punishment reserved for the slaves, non-roman freedom fighters or the criminals. It was the ingeniousness of St. Paul and his followers to turn the age old symbol of oppression into the sign of salvation for Christians. Credit also goes to Constantine the Great to promote it as a symbol of success and salvation. Pope Urban II, therefore, suggested redness of blood to the same symbol of cruelty during the crusades. Even the UNO is patronizing the Red Cross representing peace, relief and succour from the injuries caused by the wars and disasters.

The Pope also reminded the Christians of the words of Christ:

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<sup>690</sup> Mathew Henry, *A Com on the Holy Bible*, (London: Ward, Lock & Co.)Vol. VII, p. 242.

<sup>691</sup> Joh 19:16-17 KJV. As pointed out earlier one Simon of Cyrene had been compelled to carry the cross on behalf of Jesus Christ (Mt 27:32, Mk 15:21, Lk 23:26). The Gospel of John being a much later writing i.e. between 90 AD to 140 AD is unreliable in this respect. Even otherwise, the Gospel can be described as a supplementary writing to cover the apparent loopholes in the theology of St. Paul.

I come not to bring peace, but a sword<sup>692</sup>, " was to be verified, and the cross was to be the symbol of bloodshed. Imitating their Savior, who carried the cross on his shoulder, the Crusaders fixed the mark on their right shoulders, or on the upper part of their backs, and sometimes on the top of the arm. Its general color was red. The most frenzied crusaders cut the holy sign on the flesh itself, and the stigmata was deemed an evidence of peculiar sanctity.<sup>693</sup>

The Pope appealed to the audience to go to the aid of their brethren in the East. Jerusalem, the holy city of Christ was calling out in her distress to the knights of Europe begging to be freed. The Muslims with their mysterious and false religion were polluting the holy ground. He also assured the crusaders that by waging war against the infidels, they would be carrying out the will of God. Such propagation of the clergy and other orators throughout Europe had great impact to ignite the flames of fire which '*excited the millions of the West to march under the standard of the cross to the relief of Holy Land, (...) a nerve was touched of exquisite feeling and the sensation vibrated to the heart of Europe*'.<sup>694</sup> It has also been pointed out that:

Towards the end of the tenth century the millennium was believed to be at hand. The delusion was artfully cultivated by the Church for its own profit. People sold their property, and their very persons into slavery to the priests.<sup>695</sup>

People stood excited with the news of **second coming of Christ** which according to them was imminent. Many Christian knights, therefore, took it as a unique occasion to take part in the glory of the **coming Kingdom of God** as detailed in Mathews 25:31-46. Such hopes aroused great fervor in the West and the knights made elaborate preparations to proceed for the combat. According to a report:

Knights had to equip themselves at great expense with a horse, weapons and finery. Crusading was a chance to

<sup>692</sup> Math 10:34. This sword had always been unsheathed against the weaker parties. No Christian ever used the sword against the tyrants and the oppressors.

<sup>693</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 321.

<sup>694</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (London: Joseph Ogle Robinson, 1830), p. 1066.

<sup>695</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 313.

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demonstrate social standing and chivalric qualities.<sup>696</sup>

## Lame Excuses for the Crusades

No nation in power needs elaborate reasoning or excuses to dispossess the weak. To excite the fanaticism of their own people, however, the Pope and the Ecclesia started fabricating and propagating tragic tales of the Muslim atrocities with the pilgrims visiting Jerusalem. The eloquent orators and the priests started instigating the Kings, the knights and the common people to rise up and join the expeditions towards Jerusalem to liberate the holy city and the sepulcher of their savior from the desecration at the hands of the infidels. Consequently, they succeeded to arouse intense excitement in different lands of Europe. First among their lame accusations was the demolition of the church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem by fanatical Hakem the Fatimid Caliph at Cairo. This alleged incidence pertained to year 1010 AD. According to Ralph Glaber on September 29, 1010 al-Hakem ordered the destruction of holy sepulcher itself. In the footnotes on p. 18 of *The Crusades* by T. A. Archer and Charles Kingsford, we read: "*the destruction does not, however, seem to have been very complete. The sepulcher was indeed restored by Hakem himself in the following year*". The accusation, therefore, called for no action after 84 years of the redress of grievance and 74 years after the death/disappearance of the culprit. During all the intervening periods, the Christians did not lodge any protest about the offence simply because the same either did not occur at all or had been rectified soon after its commission.

As regards Hakem, he was a Fatimid Caliph at Cairo who succeeded to the caliphate as a boy of 11 in 996 AD. He had no fanaticism or abnormality in the beginning when he had a Christian for secretary and a Jew for a governor of Syria. A few years later he started developing a strain of madness. Reportedly, his madness had taken more serious form subsequently, when he

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<sup>696</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 45.

allowed himself publicly to be worshiped as the creator of the universe. Ultimately, he disappeared in about 1021 at the age of 36 years. According to some reports he was slain by the order of his sister. Hakem, as such, had met his own fate about 74 years before the start of the crusades. Hence, there had been no immediate cause of annoyance to the Christians to start crusades against the Muslims.

The second accusation was that al-Hakem had made some martyrs and many proselytes from the Christians. The Christian sources, however, provide no figures of the martyrs or the nature of their persecution. Similarly, the accusers failed to mention the number of the Christians made proselytes by al-Hakem. Being a mad man he might have enforced his own worship on the Muslims, Jews as well as the Christians. In any case, this could be some singular perversity of Hakem pertaining to distant past than any regular practice of the Muslims prevailing till the time of the crusades.

The third and the most famous accusation against Hakem and the Turks around the Holy Land was the maltreatment of Christian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem. It is, therefore, appropriate here to have a brief review about the history and origin of the pilgrimage.

## **The Pilgrimage to Jerusalem**

We find no commandment of the Lord in the Decalogue nor elsewhere in the Old Testament enjoining on the Israelites to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Pilgrimage, therefore, did not form part of the articles of faith of the Israelites. Passing reference to pilgrimage can, however, be found in the following. God said:

And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.<sup>697</sup>

There is, however, an important aspiration of King David for pilgrimage to Kaaba at Makkah but in order to

<sup>697</sup> Exo 6:4 KJV. Pilgrimage in the verse quoted above has a much different connotation from the journey or visit to a holy place for religious purposes.

conceal the truth, the Israelites or the Christians willfully distorted the fact by inserting word 'Mount Zion' in Psa 84:5:

How happy are those whose strength comes from you, who are eager to make the pilgrimage to Mount Zion.<sup>698</sup>

The forgery is apparent from the fact that many other versions of the Bible do not contain any reference to Mount Zion in the said verse e.g.

Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.<sup>699</sup>

Psalms 84 in the GNB starts with the verses:

1. How I love your Temple, LORD Almighty! 2. How I want to be there! I long to be in the LORD's Temple. With my whole being I sing for joy to the living God.<sup>700</sup>

The Christian scholars had usually been ascribing Psalms to King David naming them Zabur of David. Zabur is one of the four complete books revealed to the prominent prophets of the Lord. God said:

وَرِبُّكَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ فَصَلَّى بَعْضُ الْشَّيْطَنِ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَآتَيْنَا ذَاوَدَ زَيْوَرًا

And it is your Lord that knoweth best all beings that are in the heavens and on earth: We did bestow on some prophets more (and other) gifts than on others: and We gave to David (the gift of) the Psalms.<sup>701</sup>

It must be kept in mind that up to the death of David, Kaaba at Makkah (old name Baka), had been the first and the only house of the Lord on earth.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لِلَّذِي يَنْكَهُ مُبَارَّكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ .

Verily, the first House (of worship) appointed for mankind was that at Bakka (Makkah), full of blessing, and a guidance for Al-'Alamîn (the mankind and jinns).<sup>702</sup>

King David, therefore, longed to visit Kaaba the house of God at Makkah i.e. **Baca as is evident from Psa 84:6**

<sup>698</sup> Ps 84:5 GNB.

<sup>699</sup> Psa 84:5 KJV.

<sup>700</sup> Psa 84:1-2 GNB.

<sup>701</sup> Al-Qur'ân 17:55 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>702</sup> Al-Qur'ân 3:96 Yusuf Ali.

**of KJV, English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, GNB and NIV etc.** There are also many other versions which have tactfully used other words to conceal identity of the sanctuary at Baca. We shall be discussing all such forgeries in detail elsewhere. For the present, however, we may point out that at all places during the exodus Moses, Aaron, Joshua or the Israelites had been offering their sacrifices in the tabernacle facing towards south i.e. towards Kaaba. Even after the construction and dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, the Israelites used to stand on the north side of the temple or the altar and offered their sacrifices to the Lord facing towards south i.e. exactly towards Kaaba. The Israelites insisted on regular presence of the Lord within their community. The Almighty, therefore, allowed them to construct the tabernacle for worship of the Lord at different places in the desert or elsewhere. Although, after construction of the temple, the Jews used to face towards it during their prayers yet they had to face towards Kaaba while offering their sacrifices to the Lord.

There had been no house of the Lord at Mount Zion till the death of King David at Jerusalem. As such, there seems no sense in his longing for a pilgrimage to mount Zion. On the other hand followers of Abraham throughout Arabia and other parts of the world had, been making their pilgrimage only to Makkah. The pilgrimage of Israelites to Mount Zion started only after the dedication of the temple to the Lord by King Solomon (r. c. 970-931 BC). Prior to that there had been no concept of pilgrimage to Jerusalem among the Israelites. According to 1Ki, the Lord appeared to King Solomon and said:

And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.<sup>703</sup>

As such the pilgrimage, the worship of the Lord and sacrifices made to Him started only after dedication of

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<sup>703</sup> 1Ki 9:3 KJV.

the temple. Like other people, Jesus Christ, too, used to be taken by his parents to Jerusalem to present him before the Lord at the temple to perform the ceremony of purification<sup>704</sup> each year during the Passover festival.<sup>705</sup> Ultimately, it was during his last visit that Pontius Pilate crucified him at Jerusalem. John has described the visit in the following words:

**13.** And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, **14.** And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: **15.** And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;<sup>706</sup>

Being followers of Jesus, the Christians were obliged to visit Jerusalem for prayer and sacrifice at the temple. Apostles chosen by Jesus, his earliest disciples and followers among the Jews continued their regular visits to the temple till its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. After the death and dispersal of the genuine followers of Christ from Jerusalem, we find no fervor among gentile Christians to visit Jerusalem. St. Paul abrogated the law and the rituals being followed by the Jews. Christians, therefore, had no concept of Passover or sacrifice at the temple which the Romans had obliterated from the face of the earth. They massacred more than 1.1 million Jews in the city. After the said date, we hardly find any Christian pilgrims visiting Jerusalem to worship the Lord. Gentile Christians also did not show any resentment on crucifixion of Jesus, destruction of the holy city and the temple which stood in ruins up to 130 AD. Even St. Paul did not utter a single word to denounce the ignoble death of Jesus or destruction of temple besides massacre of hundreds of thousands of Jews.

Learning about the plans of Hadrian to obliterate all traces of the Old from Jerusalem and to dedicate the city

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<sup>704</sup> Luk 2:22-24.

<sup>705</sup> Luk 2:41-43.

<sup>706</sup> Joh 2:13-15 KJV.

to Roman God Jupiter, the Israelites under the leadership of bar Kochiba started a revolt against the Romans during 132-135 AD. Even at this time, **Hadrian's general Severus killed more than one million Jews** besides destroying every construction in the city. He, thereafter, forbade Jewish and Christian presence in the city. During 136-140 AD, Hadrian built a temple to Jupiter on the temple mount and another temple to Venus at Calvary i.e. at the site of the present church of the holy sepulcher at Jerusalem. According to Karen Armstrong '*the city that Jesus had known had now been obliterated by Hadrian's new town. Golgotha, for example was now buried under the temple of Afrodite, and the Christians would not want to worship there. (...) there is no evidence that Jerusalem was a major pilgrim centre for Christians during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. (...) Thus Jerusalem had no special status on the Christian map.*'<sup>707</sup>

## **Apologies for the Romans**

Since the Gentile Christians in the west had been the successors/descendants of the Romans, therefore, it had been impossible for them to utter a single word against the Romans crucifying Jesus, destroying all sanctuaries at Jerusalem including sepulcher of Jesus, the city and massacre of millions of Jews besides obliteration of all the signs of Judaism and Christianity from the city. Sparing the Romans, therefore, Jews had been the victims of the massacre plunder or punishment to expiate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. For more than three centuries since the death of Jesus, the Christians neither cared to locate the site of the holy sepulcher nor to raise any objection against construction of the Temple of Venus there. Origen (184/5-253/4 AD) was the only notable visitor to Jerusalem prior to Helena the mother of Constantine the Great. During 326-328 AD Constantine had sent her to Jerusalem with huge funds to locate the Holy sites and the relics there. According to Christian reports, Helena discovered not only the true cross but also ordered for demolition of the temple of

<sup>707</sup> See Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 170-171.

Venus and to build the church of Holy Sepulcher at the site. In spite of this, we find no eagerness among the Christians to make a pilgrimage to the holy sepulcher till about the first quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. The same has also been endorsed in the following:

There are few or no traces of the pilgrimage of our English ancestors to the Holy Land during the first centuries after their conversion. For them it would seem that the nearer splendour of Rome had more attraction than the remote squalor<sup>708</sup> of Jerusalem. In one instance, however, the Roman pilgrimage was but the first stage in the journey of an Englishman to Jerusalem.<sup>709</sup>

Foote and Wheeler tell us that:

Pilgrimages were made at first for a very natural reason. The faithful desired to behold the places which had been hallowed by their Savior's presence, and to bend in worship over his tomb. But in the course of time other motives operated. **Adventurous spirits, tired of the dulness of home, set out as pilgrims in order to see strange lands and profit by some new turn of fortune.** Even ladies who were sick of cloistered life, and "chaunting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon," made pilgrimages to Rome and Palestine. Their modesty was seldom proof against the sights of their journey, or their chastity against its temptations. The lady pilgrims from England were notorious for their gallantries. A foreign bishop, in the ninth century, urgently besought the Archbishop of Canterbury to prohibit English women of every rank and degree from pilgrimising; and Muratori cites an old observation that "There are few cities in Lombardy, in France, or in Gaul, in which there is not an English adulteress or harlot, to the scandal and disgrace of the whole Church." Towards the end of the tenth century the millennium was believed to be at hand. The delusion was artfully cultivated by the Church for its own profit. People sold their property, and their very persons into slavery to the priests.

"They underwent the austerities of the cloister, and the pains and labors which the monks imposed. God's vicegerents on earth were propitiated by costly gifts, and so strong was the fanaticism, that private property was suffered to decay, and noble edifices were destroyed, from the conviction of their approaching inutility. From every quarter of the Latin world the poor affrighted Christians, deserting their homes and

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<sup>708</sup> Squalor means dirty and unpleasant conditions.

<sup>709</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1894), p. 8.

ordinary occupations, crowded to the holy land. **The belief was general that on the place of his former suffering Christ would judge the world:** his zealous but ignorant votaries thought that these voluntary sacrifices and penances would be acceptable with heaven. Years rolled on years; the thunderbolts of vengeance remained in the skies; nature held her appointed course. The world discovered that its interpretations of prophecy had been rash and presumptuous.<sup>710</sup>

As regards Muslims, they had always been inclined to treat the People of Book as their fore-runners in faith. They pay full veneration to all the prophets of Israel including Moses, David, Elia, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. As legacy of the prophets of Israel, the Muslims accepted the sanctuary built at the temple mount as a house of the Lord God of the entire universe and a house of worship for the prophets as well as their followers. They, therefore, hallowed Jerusalem than ascribing any squalor to the city of God. Muslims treated Jews and the Christians in a liberal manner than to put any hindrance in their way to Jerusalem. Even on the conquest of the Jerusalem in 637, the Muslims did not expel the Christians or the Jews nor did they put any restraint on their worship or visits to the city. After 500 years of ban to enter Jerusalem, the Jews were allowed to worship the Lord there.

Caliph Haroon Rasheed is reported "to have granted the great Emperor the Holy Places at Jerusalem. It is certain that, in the latter years of Charles's reign, a colony of French monks was established on Mount Sion."<sup>711</sup> After another narrative, the writers conclude that:

From the above narratives it is plain that during the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries no insuperable obstacles barred the way of pilgrims from the West.<sup>712</sup>

It has been further reported that:

The strange concessions which Mohammed made in favour of the "Peoples of the Book," ensured Christian pilgrims from any violent persecution.<sup>713</sup>

<sup>710</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 313-314.

<sup>711</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 10.

<sup>712</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 11-12.

<sup>713</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 12.

Enjoying the freedom, the pilgrims from the West used to visit Jerusalem singularly or in small groups. History records no mass movement of the Christian pilgrims up to 1058 AD when all of a sudden substantial number of pilgrims led by certain bishops from Europe surprised the Muslims and others in the Holy Land.

Ealdred, Archbishop of York, went to Jerusalem in 1058, in such state as no other before him, and offered at our Lord's tomb a golden chalice of wondrous workmanship and price. , Six years later Siegfried of Mayence and three other bishops led a motley crowd of seven thousand pilgrims to the Holy Land. Their gorgeous apparel excited the cupidity of the Saracens, and they fled for refuge to a fort, where they defended themselves during three days, but at last offered all their money in return for their lives, and admitted seventeen of the Arabs within the walls. The Arab leader unrolled his turban, and flinging it round Bishop Herman of Bamberg's neck exclaimed, "Thou and all thou hast are mine." This was more than the bishop could bear, and with a sudden blow<sup>714</sup> he laid his captor prostrate. At this act of episcopal valour the Christians regained their courage, bound the Saracens who had entered the fort, and renewed the contest with those outside. At last the Saracen lord of Ramleh came to the rescue, and under his guidance the pilgrims visited Jerusalem in safety. But only two thousand lived to return to Europe.<sup>715</sup>

Apparently, the quotation recorded above reveals much less than it conceals. The writer has no explanation for incongruously varied persons in the crowd. Herman of Bamberg seemed to be some master of martial arts in the guise of a Bishop. The story does not disclose the number or description of the Saracens who put the 7000 pilgrims on their heels. What was the name and place of the empty fort vast enough to accommodate a contingent of 7000 men and women? Look at the tactfulness of the writer to report the treachery of the bishops under the cover of episcopal valor. Since they had fraudulently taken hostages of 17 of the Arab leaders, therefore, it was natural for the lord of Ramleh to intervene for the rescue of the Arabs and to ensure

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<sup>714</sup> Hermen must, therefore, have been a chivalrous champion of Christ in the guise of the bishop.

<sup>715</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 17.

security of the pilgrims up to Jerusalem. It seems that the venturesome pilgrims did not stop repeating their mischief which might have caused such loss to them that only two thousand survived to return to Europe. In view of the above and other dubious points in the narrative, it depicts a perverted picture of the facts than a plain truth.

The report of T. A. Archer quoted above is also dubious due to certain similarities with the great German pilgrimage of 1064-65 led by several bishops. When "they reached Caesarea, and on good Friday they were attacked by Bedouin bandits ... The pilgrims fled to a nearby fort. On Easter Sunday, the Bedouin leaders met with Gunther there and agreed to a truce, but the Bedouins threatened to kill the pilgrims anyway. Gunther had them killed and hung over the walls as a deterrent to further attacks. On Easter Monday, the Fatimid governor of Ramla drove off the Bedouins and freed the pilgrims who then rested in Ramla for two weeks. They arrived in Jerusalem on April 12".<sup>716</sup>

Failing to decide which of the versions is correct; we find no reason for an outburst of a pilgrimage with the posture of an invading army. Even the 2<sup>nd</sup> report conceals many things from the readers. The report describes no reason for callous behavior of the Fatimid governor of Ramla driving off the Bedouins but taking no revenge for the killing and humiliating display of dead Bedouins (Muslims of course) by the so called pilgrims.

As regards over burdening of the pilgrims with exorbitant taxes, the same was a general accusation without mentioning the amount of tax to substantiate the allegation. The accusers also did not mention the number of pilgrims plundered by the bandits. Although, the possibility of some sporadic violation of the Muslim law at the hands of unruly persons cannot be denied yet we feel that the Christians were making a mount of the molehill. They were propagating exaggerated vices of the Muslims only to infuriate the Christian world to fall

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<sup>716</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.'The Great German Pilgrimage of 1064-65'.

upon the indisposed and enfeebled caliphate at Baghdad and disintegrated successors of Malik Shah Seljuk.

Factually, the Muslims had been treating the Christian as well as Jewish pilgrims liberally and without any prejudice against them. Here is a report to alleviate the charges of the Christian West against the Muslim East.

But Bernard pays a higher tribute to the good order and religious moderation which characterised the Eastern Caliphate in his days. At Beneventum the Christian folk had murdered their own prince, and destroyed all Christian law, till Louis, grandson of Charles the Great, introduced some kind of discipline. Worse than this, the roads leading to Rome were so thronged with banditti, that no one could reach St. Peter's in safety, unless he belonged to a large and well-armed party. This state of misrule Bernard contrasts with the peace prevailing in the Mohammedan lands through which he travelled. "I will tell you how Christians hold the law of God in Jerusalem, and in Egypt. Now the Christians and the pagans have peace one with another, in such wise that, if on my journey the camel or ass that bore my little property were to die, and I were to leave all my chattels there with none to guard them, while I went to another city, on my return I should find everything untouched. But if in any city, or on any bridge or road they find a man journeying, whether by day or by night, without some charter and seal from the king or ruler of the district, he is straightway thrust into prison till he can give an account of himself whether he be a spy or not."

This happy state of affairs continued with some intervals of disturbance till the early years of the eleventh century.<sup>717</sup>

The facts, therefore, must have been different from the Western propaganda against the Muslims.

## **The Lure of Wealth and Glory**

Although, most of the crusaders were moved by the religious fanaticism aroused by the preachers, yet there were many who rode eastward to display their chivalry or in search of a fortune.

For many decades historians argued that the crusaders also rode eastward in search of a fortune. The accounts we have of the appeal that was made to the knights of Europe certainly

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<sup>717</sup> T. A. Archer, *The Crusades*, p. 12-13.

included the promise of wealth. Alexius Comnenus's letter to Count Robert II of Flanders pretended that in Constantinople there was more gold than anywhere else in the world – and that the city's churches were over-flowing with silver and precious stones and fine silks as well as gold; moreover, he claimed that the riches of all the emperors of the ancient Roman Empire were hidden in the palaces of the city.<sup>718</sup>

The following quotation also gives us a hint about the motives of the participants.

Chivalry had induced a love of fighting and adventure, and brave knights dreamed of carving out kingdoms from the empire of the infidels. The east was thought to abound in riches; the "wealth of Ormus<sup>719</sup> and of Ind" gleamed on the imagination; and sensuality was allured by the fabulous flavor of oriental wines and the magical beauty of Grecian women. Avarice, ambition, and lust, co-operated with faith.<sup>720</sup>

Here is the real motive behind the crusades. The chronicler Robert the Monk put this into the mouth of Urban II:

... this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war, and that frequently you perish by mutual wounds. Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves ... God has conferred upon you above all nations' great glory in arms. Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>721</sup>

The readers, therefore, need to be reminded that the imperialism in the west had started with Alexander the Greek who conquered and colonized many lands in Asia and Africa. The Romans also started their imperialism with the conquest, destruction and colonization of

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<sup>718</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, (London: Lorenz Books, Anness Publishing Ltd. 2009), p. 44.

<sup>719</sup> The Kingdom of Ormus was a 10th to 17th century kingdom located within the Persian Gulf and extending as far as the Strait of Hormuz.

<sup>720</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 322.

<sup>721</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. Pope Urban II.

Carthage in about 140 BC. Subsequently, they deprived the Greeks from all their possessions in Asia and Africa. Ultimately, the Western Roman Empire also flopped in 476 AD bringing an end to the imperialism of the western European nations. The Eastern Roman Empire, however, continued to exist up to 1453 AD. It is, therefore, opined that starting of crusades by Pope Urban II was the first attempt to rejuvenate the imperialism of the Western European powers culminating in worldwide colonization and imperialism covering all parts of the globe.

## START OF THE CRUSADES

### The First Waves of the Crusaders

The fiery speeches of Peter the Hermit, the exhortation of the Pope, the Priests and the Christian Saints had aroused such passion among the Christians that there had been several mass movements in different parts of Europe to assault and attack on the Muslim east and especially the holy land. Consequently, many expeditions left France and Lorraine in early spring of 1096. A renowned historian records that:

So horrible were the barbarities of the European mob that we can feel no regret for the disastrous issues of popular fervor. We cannot turn from the folly and crimes of the people to any grandeur of heroism, or any splendour of success. More than a quarter of a million of wretched fanatics perished in the first great convulsion of enthusiasm, and the Muselman banners still floated over the walls of Jerusalem. While the bodies of the Croises were whitening on the plains of Nice, or putrifying in the marshes of Hungary, the feudal princes of Europe were collecting their tenants and retainers, and arraying them for war. Different scenes are now before us; scenes disfigured indeed, but not totally characterized by horror and flagitiousness.<sup>722</sup>

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<sup>722</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 80-82.

The unwieldy mobs infuriated by speeches of the orators, saints and hermits had no definite direction before them nor was there any sagacious leader to organize the mobs into the discipline of an army. Vengeance against the enemy was prime call they were following. Whosoever came their way was the victim of their wrath. Indiscriminate killing, plundering and setting on fire was the motive of their movement. The authors of *The Crusades* report that:

In Lorraine it was declared that a man's first service to God should be the destruction of the accursed race<sup>723</sup> which had crucified the Lord.<sup>724</sup>

Walter the Penniless a gentleman of Burgundy led the first body which consisted of 20,000 foot and only eight horsemen. It was not a disciplined march due to which it

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<sup>723</sup> By the accursed race, they mean the Jews and the Israelites, the race to whom they owe their God and the savior. Besides Jesus, the race comprised of the prophets such as Jacob, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, David, Zechariah and John the Baptist. Right from the time of their occupation of Jerusalem, the Romans had spared no occasion to destroy millions of the Israelites (the cursed race) in the Holy Land. Crucifixion of Jesus was just a routine matter for them and they crucified him as an insurrectionist against the Emperor. Roman soldiers mocked him "Long live the king of the Jews". (Mathew 27:28-31, Mark 15:17-20 John 19:1-3). The severe flogging, ridicule and ignoble death of Jesus the Jew, on cross was performed by the Roman soldiers not only to terrify and to humiliate the Jews but also to inflict on Jesus the punishment reserved only for the slaves as criminals.

The Evangelists being Roman Citizens had no option except to pervert the historical facts only to save their own skin. They, therefore, prudently inculpated the Jews instead of the Romans who had massacred or crucified millions of Jews in the Holy Land including Jerusalem. The Christian followers of St. Paul also could not afford to acknowledge the truth that the Lord God did not send Jesus towards the Gentiles or the Romans. His sole duty was to retrieve the lost sheep among the house of Israel (Mat 10:5-6, 15:24). The Western Christians as successors of the Romans also cannot afford to identify the race that must need be cursed for the cruel flogging and despicable death inflicted on the last prophet of the Lord among the Jews.

<sup>724</sup> T. A. Archer & Charles L. Kingsford, *The Crusades*, p. 36.

ended in a miserable failure within the Christian lands. Historians describe its failure in the following words:

They swept through Hungary and entered Bulgaria, where they were regarded as so many savage invaders, and refused supplies. Walter's mob turned their arms against the unfriendly Christians, but they were miserably beaten. Hundreds of them fled into a church, trusting that the Bulgarians would not spill blood in the house of God. The sanctity of the place was so far respected, but the edifice was set on fire, and many perished in the flames, while others were killed in leaping from the roof. Walter escaped with a few associates, and found refuge at Constantinople.<sup>725</sup>

The fanaticism of the misguided crusaders can be assessed from the following:

At Cologne the synagogues were destroyed, the Jews slaughtered, and their houses sacked. At Mayence the Jewish community vainly purchased the arch-bishop's protection and sought safety in his house. Even here they were not secure; at sunrise a certain Count Emicho led the rabble against them; the doors were broken open, and men, women, and children massacred without mercy, till in their despair the victims sought death at each other's hands.<sup>726</sup>

## Expedition Led by Peter the Hermit

About the next expedition, we learn that:

Peter the Hermit led the second host of forty thousand men, women and children, of all nations and languages. Arriving at Malleville they avenged their precursors by assaulting the town, slaying seven thousand of the inhabitants, and abandoning themselves to "every species of grossness and libertinism." According to Mills "virgin modesty was no protection," and "conjugal virtue no safeguard" against these sanctified soldiers of the cross. King Carloman marched an army against them, and they fled. Many were drowned in the Save, on the other side of which the survivors were attacked by a large body of Turcomans. The French suffered heavily, but the Germans and Lorrainers avenged them; and Peter offered as a bloody sacrifice to God the few prisoners who remained after the battle.

Bulgaria was a desert before Peter's horde. The duke had

<sup>725</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 324-325 (quoted from Mills, Vol. I, pp. 65, 69.).

<sup>726</sup> T. A. Archer & Charles L. Kingsford, *The Crusades*, p. 36.

gone to the fortified town of Nyssa, and the inhabitants had retreated into the forests. A band of Germans set fire to some houses near Nyssa, and the people rushed upon the rear of the Crusaders, avenging their wrongs with massacre and plunder. In turn the city was assaulted, but the Crusaders were repulsed with a loss of ten thousand.<sup>727</sup>

From Bulgaria, the mob marched to Constantinople. Refusing them permission into the city, the Emperor Alexius shipped them across the Bosphorus where they "*committed crimes which made nature shudder (...) the French were distinguished for ferocity. They killed children at the breast, scattered their limbs in the air and carried their ravages to the very walls of Nice.*"<sup>728</sup>

## **Godeshel's Rabbles**

The third crusading wave consisting of about two hundred thousand persons was commanded by Godeshel, a German monk. They mingled with their devotion, a brutal license of rapine, prostitution and drunkenness. Here is a report about them:

According to Michaud, they gave themselves up to intemperance; they forgot Constantinople and Jerusalem "in tumultuous scenes of debauchery," and "pillage, violation, and murder were everywhere left as the traces of their passage." At Mersburgh they committed horrible outrages. On a trifling quarrel they impaled a young Hungarian in the market place. The Hungarians rose in arms, the plains of Belgrade were covered with the Crusaders' bones, and only a few of Godeschal's rabble escaped to tell the tale.<sup>729</sup>

## **Catastrophe Befalling the Jews**

After the failure of the third attempt, the Christian nations again joined hands to proceed towards Jerusalem as stated in the following:

The fourth wave issued from England, France, Flanders and Lorraine. Mills calls them "another herd of wild and desperate savages." Their leaders were a goat and a goose, who were thought to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. The Turks being far off, they took to murdering the Jews, a crime which gratified

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<sup>727</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 325-326.

<sup>728</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 327.

<sup>729</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 328.

at once their avarice and their fanaticism. Cologne was the first city they stained with blood. Thousands of Jews were massacred and pillaged in the towns on the banks of the Rhine and Moselle. Seven hundred were slaughtered at Mayence, despite the protests of the venerable metropolitan. The Bishops of Trèves and Worms protected the Jews on condition of their apostacy. Some noble spirits disdained the terms and slew themselves in the palace of the Bishop of Worms. At Trèves many Jews barricaded their houses, burnt their wealth, and perished in the flames; while in other cases "Mothers plunged the dagger into the breasts of their own children, fathers and sons destroyed each other, and women threw themselves into the Moselle." The infernal multitude, as Mills calls them, "hurried on to the south in their usual career of carnage and rapine;" but at Membsburg their passage was opposed by an Hungarian army. It proved that "their cowardice was as abject as their boldness had been ferocious; and the Hungarians pursued them with such slaughter that the waters of the Danube were for some days red with their blood."

Three hundred thousand Crusaders thus perished before a single city had been wrested from the infidels. Many died of famine and disease, and most of the others fell fighting against their fellow Christians.<sup>730</sup>

## Clergy Encashes the Turmoil

All such disasters of the crusaders within the Christian lands failed to cool down the fanaticism ignited by the Priests. They on the other hand became more determined to start afresh with a greater zeal and preparation to succeed. Michaud describes that:

A more regular crusade was undertaken by the princes of feudal Europe in the following year. Nobles sold their estates, or exchanged them for arms and equipments, and it is worthy of notice that **the chief purchasers were the clergy**. Father Maimbourg declared that, while the secular princes ruined themselves for the cause of Christ, the princes of the Church took advantage of the general delirium to enrich themselves.<sup>731</sup>

It is evident from the above that in spite of hectic, repeated and prolonged expeditions made by the

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<sup>730</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 328.

<sup>731</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 328-330.

crusaders, they failed to gain anything good in the Christian cause. Instead of providing relief to the miseries of mankind they added to the depravity of Christian morals during their expeditions. The crusades caused immense loss of life, property and moral values in the regions traversed by them. The misguided Christian mobs caused irreparable losses even to the crusaders themselves:

Nearly a million soldiers of Christ, of all ages and conditions, and of both sexes, had perished in less than two years; to say nothing of those who fell victims to their cruelty and fanaticism. Yet the holy sepulchre was still in the hands of the infidels, the object of the Crusade was unaccomplished, and only a feeble remnant of the hosts that assembled at Nice were now ranged under the banner of the cross.<sup>732</sup>

Although some of the Christian scholars point out exaggerations in the accounts quoted above, yet others endorse the same. Hallam's calculation seems to uphold the figures:

So many crimes and so much misery have seldom been accumulated in so short a space as in the three years of the first expedition. We should be warranted by contemporary writers in stating the loss of the Christians alone during this period at nearly a million; but at the least computation it must have exceeded half that number.<sup>733</sup>

Of the seven hundred thousand who assembled at Nice only about forty thousand remained, and of these only twenty thousand foot and fifteen hundred cavalry could be reckoned as soldiers.<sup>734</sup>

## The Crusaders at Constantinople

The Crusaders had reached Constantinople even during the first crusade but the emperor Alexius being suspicious of their intentions did not allow the armies to enter the city. Individuals and groups comprising up to six persons could, however, enter Constantinople at a time. According to a report:

<sup>732</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 340.

<sup>733</sup> Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages*. Vol. I, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed. (London: John Murray, 1853), p. 36.

<sup>734</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 341.

The city of Constantinople amazed the crusaders. Emperor Alexius had decided to make the armies camp outside Constantinople's great city walls, but he allowed small groups of five or six at a time to enter the city in order to pray in the churches and see the sights. They were astonished by what they found – by the city's size and wealth, by its baths and sanitation and by the beauty of the churches and the rich collections of treasures and of sacred relics. Fulcher of Chartres wrote: 'Oh what a splendid and noble city! What fine monasteries, what elegant palaces we saw, what superb workmanship! How many superb works.'<sup>735</sup>

From Constantinople, the crusaders marched towards Nicaea. It is said that:

During the siege of Nicaea, the crusaders lobbed the heads of corpses into the city.<sup>736</sup>

## Towards Antioch

During the first crusade, under Godfrey of Bouillon, the Christian hosts marched towards Antioch. They were exposed to most frightful sufferings during their march across burning Phrygia. Here is a report about the same:

Historians say that women were seen giving premature birth to their offspring in the midst of burning and open fields: whilst others, in despair, with children they could no longer nourish, implored death with loud cries, and, in the excess of their agony, rolled naked on the earth in the sight of the whole army."

"Carrión was openly dressed," says Mills, "and human flesh was eaten in secret." He adds in a footnote that "Cannibalism was carried to a great extent by the lowest of the low."<sup>737</sup>

## Cannibalism at Antioch

The crusaders besieged the city on 21/10/1097 but they had to wait till 3/6/1098. There had been severe famine in the Christian camp during the siege which led them to cannibalism.

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<sup>735</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 54.

<sup>736</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 56.

<sup>737</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 331.

Carrion was openly dressed; and human flesh was eaten in secret. Twenty-four shillings scarcely furnished a horse's provender for one night; and hence the cavalry, which at the beginning of the siege numbered more than seventy thousand horses, was soon after Christmas reduced to two thousand. The winter rains were heavier than usual; they made a morass of the camp, and putrified the tents and military accoutrements. Pestilential diseases necessarily sprung from these calamities. The surface of the Latin positions presented the appearance of one vast burial place.<sup>738</sup>

The same writer adds that:

Bohemond slew some Turkish prisoners and roasted them in general presence. He then exclaimed to the astonished bystanders that his appetite would submit to necessity, and that during the famine he would greedily devour what at other times would be loathsome and disgusting.<sup>739</sup>

## **The Crusaders Capture Antioch**

Through the treason and treachery of Firouz, the Crusaders succeeded to capture the city. He was a wealthy Armenian Christian convert to Islam who held a high post in Yaghi-Sean's Seljuk Turkish Government during the crusades. Armstrong reports that:

On June 2, the night that Stephen left, the Christian made the crucial breakthrough. Bohemond had contracted a potential traitor inside the city through his Armenian spies. Captain Firouz was an Armenian Christian who had converted to Islam, but he was becoming dissatisfied with the regime and its religion and had made it clear that, for a price, he would betray the city. That night he sent word to Bohemond that he was ready to do the deed: the Crusaders should bring their ladders to the Tower of the Two Sisters and he would let them into the city. The Crusaders did indeed enter the city that night crying aloud, "Deus Hoc pult!" They drove the Turks from the garrison and looted and pillaged the city. The starving Crusaders even ransacked the houses of the Armenian Christians as well as the Muslims, and the streets were filled with dead bodies. Against all the odds, the Crusaders had managed to liberate the venerable Christian city.<sup>740</sup>

<sup>738</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>739</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>740</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), p. 171.

On June 3, 1098, Firouz hung a rope ladder for Bohemond's men who climbed up into the city and opened the gates. The Armenians inside the walls of Antioch also joined them in massacring the Muslims and the Turks in the city.

Besides killing all living beings and rapacious onslaugths on the women, the crusaders also put to fire most of the buildings in the city. Soon they fell short of all provisions which led them to starve or to eat everything rotten, filthy or loathsome. An early French Poet described the event in his poem titled '*The Leaguer*'<sup>741</sup> of Antioch'. Von Sybel gives an abbreviated translation of the same:

## The Leaguer of Antioch

Now lithe and listen lordlings,  
while the Christians' hap I tell,  
That, as they lay in leaguer,  
from hunger them befell.  
In evil case the army stood,  
their stores of food were spent:  
Peter the holy Hermit, he sat before his tent:  
Then came to him the King Tafur,  
and with him fifty score  
Of men at arms, not one of them  
but hunger gnawed him sore.  
'Thou holy Hermit, counsel us,  
and help us at our need;  
Help, for God's grace,  
these starving men with wherewithal to feed.'  
But Peter answered,  
'Out, ye drones, a helpless pack that cry,  
While all unburied round about  
the slaughtered Paynim'<sup>742</sup> lie.  
A dainty dish is Paynim flesh,  
with salt and roasting due.'  
'Now by my fay,' quoth King Tafur,  
'the Hermit sayeth true.'  
Then fared he forth the Hermit's tent,

<sup>741</sup> Leaguer signifies a military camp.

<sup>742</sup> A Non-Christian, Especially a Muslim.

and sent his menye out,  
 More than ten thousand,  
 where in heaps the Paynim lay about.  
 They hewed the corpses limb from limb,  
 and disembowelled clean,  
 And there was sodden meat and roast,  
 to blunt their hunger keen:  
 Right savory fare it seemed there;  
 they smacked their lips and spake,  
 Farewell to fasts: a daintier meal  
 than this who asks to make?  
 'Tis sweeter far than porker's flesh,  
 or bacon<sup>743</sup> seethed in grease.  
 Let's make good cheer, and feast us here,  
 till life and hunger cease.<sup>744</sup>

Gibbon also says of the crusaders that:

In the dire necessity of famine, they sometimes roasted and devoured the flesh of their infant or adult captives."<sup>745</sup>

Bohemond slew some Turkish prisoners and roasted them publicly. Cannibalism was also resorted to at the siege of Marra. One chronicler dryly says there is nothing surprising in the matter, and wonders that they sometimes ate dogs in preference to Saracens.

Mutilation of the dead was indulged in as a sport. The heads of two thousand Turks, who fell in a sortie from Antioch, were cut off; some were exhibited as trophies, others were fixed on stakes round the camp, and others shot into the town. On another occasion they dragged infidel corpses from their sepulchres, and exposed fifteen hundred heads to the weeping Turks.

Fighting for Christ did not keep the Crusaders chaste. During the siege of Antioch they gave the rein to their passions, and "seldom does the history of profane wars display such scenes of intemperance and prostitution." One archdeacon of royal birth was slain by the Turks as he reposed in an orchard, playing dice with a Syrian concubine.<sup>746</sup>

"If contemporary accounts are to be credited, all the vices of the infamous Babylon prevailed among the liberators of Sion. Strange and unheard-of spectacle! Beneath the tents of the Crusaders famine and voluptuousness formed a hideous

<sup>743</sup> Cured meat from the back or side of a pig.

<sup>744</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 333-334.

<sup>745</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. VII,(London: 1821), p. 252.

<sup>746</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 334-335.

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union; impure love, an unbounded passion for play, with all the excesses of debauch, were mingled with the images of death.<sup>747</sup>

## Unburied Corpses Bred a Plague

The multitude of unburied corpses bred a plague which destroyed more than a hundred thousand. At last they moved towards Marra, which they captured. They slaughtered all the inhabitants who did not escape by suicide, and devoured their flesh; and it is even said that human flesh was publicly exposed for sale in the Christian camp. The streets ran with blood until ferocity was tired. Bohemond then reviewed his prisoners. "They who were vigorous or beautiful," says Mills, "were reserved for the slave market at Antioch, **but the aged and infirm were immolated at the altar of cruelty.**"<sup>748</sup> (compare this with Saladin's acts of magnanimity at Jerusalem).

The bloodshed and savagery continued for a time but when they found nobody to be killed, the crusaders turned towards plunder and robbery:

When, however, every species of habitation, from the marble palace to the meanest hovel, had been converted into a scene of slaughter, when the narrow streets and the spacious squares were all alike disfigured with human gore<sup>749</sup>, and crowded with mangled<sup>750</sup> carcasses, then the assassins turned robbers, and became as mercenary as they had been merciless.<sup>751</sup>

During all this period, the crusaders have been behaving as brutes without any morals whatsoever. Here is another report of their cannibalism:

The famine still continued, and was as productive of crimes as the most unbounded plenty. The Croises<sup>752</sup> were in that state of sullen savage desperation which the extreme of misery often produces. The dying and the dead were spectacles so familiar to their eyes, that death no longer taught them morality. The exhortations of the clergy to virtue, though

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<sup>747</sup> ibid, p. 335.

<sup>748</sup> ibid, p. 339-340.

<sup>749</sup> Gore signifies bloodshed, slaughter or carnage.

<sup>750</sup> Cut-about, mutilated or spoiled.

<sup>751</sup> *The Investigator*, V. II, ed. by W. B. Collyer, (London: S2, Fleet Street, 1821), p. 122.

<sup>752</sup> The Christian crusaders.

ceaseless, were in vain, and at the suggestion of the papal legate, judicial punishments were inflicted on moral crimes. Gaming, usury, drunkenness, and frauds in buying and selling were cognizable by a tribunal, which was composed of lay and clerical elders. The pious Adhemar<sup>753</sup> thought that conjugal affection was as sinful as immodest love, and that perfect chastity would be visited by divine favour. The women, both vicious and modest, were therefore, separated from the men, and placed in a remote corner of the camp.<sup>754</sup>

According to accounts by Tancred's biographer Radulph of Caen, and in a letter to pope Urban II, the troops at Maarrat an-Numan were driven by desperation and maddening hunger to commit acts of cannibalism. Guibert of Nogent, who discussed incidents of cannibalism in his *Historia Hierosolymitana*, reported that perhaps because of incidents such as this or perhaps because of wild rumour and speculation, the Turks and other 'Saracens' became convinced that it was common practice among the crusaders, whom they regarded as savages, to eat the flesh of their dead enemies. He then described an act of provocation by the *Tafurs*, who openly spit-roasted a slain Turkish prisoner in view of the Turks in order to madden and anger them – they had no intention of eating the man's flesh. It is probable that accounts of crusaders eating flesh were propaganda on behalf of Christian writers seeking to make the crusaders seem fierce.<sup>755</sup>

Although, we find in the above a falsification of the probability of cannibalism committed by the crusaders yet on the same page of the book, we find another confirmation of the same:

<sup>753</sup> We do not know the source leading to such a thought of pious Adhemar. So far as we know, the Almighty or His prophets like Moses or Jesus never termed the conjugal affection as sinful. On what authority one could declare sex between the married couples as destroyer of chastity. According to the Divine arrangement, there never had been more than one lawgiver in a community. The Israelites had none else than Moses. Jesus Christ did not give any new law. He, however, relaxed certain stringencies in the Law of Moses as per commandments from the Lord. The Qur'ān quotes him that "(I have come to you), to attest the Law which was before me. And to make lawful to you part of what was (Before) forbidden to you; I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me". (3:50). As such, people like pious Adhemar can be taken merely as extremists without any authority to meddle with the Law of the Lord.

<sup>754</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 176-177.

<sup>755</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 74.

In December an expedition was mounted to take the strategically significant town of Maarrat an-Numan to the south of Antioch. The army captured the town and slaughtered its 20,000 population and then, finding little or no food, they were allegedly reduced to cooking and eating some of the freshly slain inhabitants.<sup>756</sup>

On the very next page is a picture with a caption reading:

As the crusader army advanced through the Holy Land, its reputation for ferocity and acts of barbarity preceded it.<sup>757</sup>

## Cannibalism at Marrah

Charles Mills reports about cannibalism at Marrah in the following words:

The Christians learnt nothing from experience; their sufferings from famine had been the extreme of misery, and yet they sat down to the siege of Marrah with no stores of provisions. They were soon reduced to their old resources of dogs' flesh and human carcasses. They broke open the tombs of the Muselmans; ripped up the bellies of the dead for gold and dressed and eat the fragments of flesh. The siege must have been raised, had not Bohemond arrived with new succours; the desperate savages mounted the walls in various places and the city was taken. Their cruelty could not be appeased by a bloodless conquest: extermination, not clemency marked their victory. The night checked but did not close their work of blood for the next day they used their swords with such industrious ferocity that the most obscure places of the city were filled with carcasses. Many of the inhabitants were guilty of self-slaughter, in order to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy; but the victims both of savagery and of despair were mangled and eaten by their conquerors.<sup>758</sup>

## Vices of the Crusaders

Referring to the vices of Croises, Charles Mills reports that:

These external successes were more than balanced by internal calamities. Discord prevailed among the princes; and they

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<sup>756</sup> ibid, p. 74.

<sup>757</sup> ibid, p. 75.

<sup>758</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 228-229.

even assisted their people in rapine and theft. Public justice did not restrain private injury, and the will of every man was his only law. The heat of the season, the multitude of human carcasses, and the general disorders of the army, bred a pestilential disorder, which spread its ravages with such horrible energy, that in a few months it destroyed more than one hundred thousand persons. A troop of fifteen hundred German cavaliers, high in courage, and completely armed, recently landed at the port of St. Simeon, were cut off in a few days.<sup>759</sup>

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<sup>759</sup> *ibid*, p. 224-225.

# THE CRUSADERS AT JERUSALEM AND CONSTANTINOPLE

## **Crusaders At Jerusalem**

The Roman rule in Palestine had ended with Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 637 AD. Since then Muslims continued to rule Jerusalem up to first half of July 1099 when it fell to the crusaders. The preceding chapter, therefore, describes crusaders' expeditions till their march towards Jerusalem.

**On January 13, 1099, the Crusaders started from Marrah towards Jerusalem barefooted to venerate the city of God.** They reached outside Jerusalem on 7/6/1099 and continued the siege up to July 15, 1099. It was a Good Friday. During this short period, the Christian mobs had suffered from utter depravity of their morality. Charles Mills reports that:

Misery had produced disorder and crime; and the clergy complained that, in the short space of a month, the character of the Christian soldiers before Jerusalem had become as immoral as it had been in the long and painful siege of Antioch. Superstition was as active as vice; and it was not single imposition which could make the people question the truth of visions and dreams.<sup>760</sup>

The climax of the First Crusade was reached by capitulation of the Holy City from the Fatimid Caliphate. For two days, thereafter, the Crusaders ran amok killing and looting in the city. According to Charles Mills

The Muselmans fought for a while then fled to their temples and submitted their necks to slaughter. Such was the carnage in the Mosque of Omar that the mutilated carcases were hurried by the torrents of blood into the court; dissevered arms and heads floated into the current that carried them into contact with bodies to which they had not belonged. Ten

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<sup>760</sup> *ibid*, p. 249.

Thousand people were murdered in this sanctuary. It was not only the lacerated and headless trunks which shocked the sights but the figures of the victors themselves reeking with the blood of their slaughtered enemies. No place of refuge remained to the vanquished, so indiscriminately did the insatiable fanaticism of the conquerors disregard alike supplication and resistance. Some were slain, others were thrown from the tops of the churches and of the citadel. On entering the city, the duke of Lorraine drew his sword and murdered the helpless Saracens, in revenge for the Christian blood spilt by the Moslems and as a punishment for the railries and outrages to which they had subjected the pilgrims. But after having avenged the cause of Heaven, Godfrey did not neglect other religious duties. He threw aside his armour, clothed himself in a linen mantle, and, with bare head and naked feet, went to the church of the sepulchre. His piety (unchristian as it may appear to enlightened days,) was the piety of all the soldiers : they laid down their arms, washed their hands, and put on habiliments of repentance. In the spirit of humility, with contrite hearts, with tears and groans, they walked over all those places which the Saviour had consecrated by his presence.<sup>761</sup>

In the following, we reproduce another account describing the fall of Jerusalem:

At the very hour when Christ was crucified they erected their banners on the walls of Jerusalem. Tasso's<sup>762</sup> description of the scene is very beautiful, and would be delightful if we were ignorant of what followed. **Instead of making the "holy hour" an occasion for mercy, the Crusaders acted like wild beasts, and turned the city of the sepulchre of Christ into a hell of rapine, murder and lust.**<sup>763</sup>

#### ▪ **Bloodshed and Rapine at Jerusalem**

Under the title '*The Holy City Captured*', Charles Phillips has reported that:

Now, in the moment of triumph they had dreamt of for years, they unleashed their pent-up emotions in a bloodbath.

<sup>761</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821) p. 254-256.

<sup>762</sup> Torquato Tasso (1544 -1595) was an Italian poet of the 16th century, best known for his poem *La Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Delivered, 1581), in which he depicts a highly imaginative version of the combats between Christians and Muslims at the end of the First Crusade, during the siege of Jerusalem.

<sup>763</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 343-344.

According to the same authors, 'the defenders of the city fled ... and our men, following Lethold, ran after them, slaughtering them and dismembering them all the way to the temple of Solomon. And in that place there was so much killing that the blood came up to our ankles. According to the Provencal chronicler Raymond of Aguilers, 'in the streets and squares of the city, piles of heads, hands and feet could be seen. People were making their way over the corpses of men and horses. But this is only to describe the minor horrors.'<sup>764</sup>

Here is another quotation describing the bestialities of the crusaders at Jerusalem:

The words of an eye-witness paint the horrors of the day in general terms without any attempt at detail — "When our men had taken the city with its walls and towers, there were things wondrous to be seen. For some of the enemy, and this is a small matter, were reft of their heads, while others riddled through with arrows were forced to leap down from the towers; others, after long torture, were burnt in the flames. In all the streets and squares there were to be seen piles of heads, and hands, and feet ; and along the public ways foot and horse alike made passage over the bodies of the dead."<sup>765</sup>

John J. Pool also describes the event of the conquest of Jerusalem in the following:

They fairly wept for joy at the glorious success of their enterprise, and yet their hearts were filled with hatred towards the discomfited Mohammedans. The city, sad to say, was given up to pillage, for **the Christians in the hour of their triumph forgot the Christian grace of mercy, and thought of nothing but revenge, and spared neither age nor sex.** About 70,000 Moslems were put to the sword, and for three days a promiscuous massacre was indulged in throughout the whole extent of the Holy City. Even the wretched inhabitants who took refuge in the Mosque of Omar and claimed the sanctuary of a sacred place, were slain in cold blood. The victors are said to have boasted that "in the great Mosque whither they pursued the fugitives they rode up to the knees of their horses in the blood of Saracens."<sup>766</sup>

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<sup>764</sup> Charles Phillips, Crusades and the Crusader Knights, p. 80.

<sup>765</sup> T. A. Archer & Charles L. Kingsford, *The Crusades*, p. 91.

<sup>766</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammadanism*, p. 298-299.

### ▪ **Repeated Breach of Promise**

The entire recorded history of the Christian West is full of treachery and backing out of the promise or violation of various truces made by them. Only St. Louis IX (r. 1226-1270), the ideal Medieval king of France has been shown as an exception to the rule. The historians describe him as just and holy man, who loved God, the truth and his subjects. It has been said about him that:

**The holy King loved the truth so much that he kept his promise even to the Saracens.**<sup>767</sup>

It, therefore, shows that doing justice, speaking truth or keeping promise was rare among the Christians. To keep promise with the Saracens or any non-Christian nation could, therefore, be taken as abnormality in the Christian West.

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) a Londoner and a reformer who authored '*Utopia*' observed that:

‘The Utopian hate war as plainly brutal, although practised more eagerly by man than any other animal.’ In Europe, says the author in an ironic passage, ‘where the Christian faith and religion are practised, the sanctity of leagues is held sacred and inviolate’ – **the truth being, of course, that European treaties were often broken almost as soon as they were made!**<sup>768</sup>

*History of Crusades* depicts Bohemond breaking his solemn promise of safety assured to the wealthy citizens of Marrah:

Some wealthy citizens had procured a promise of safety from Bohemond, by tempting his avarice but when streams of blood flowed through the streets the perfidious chief commanded his prisoners to be brought before him. They who were vigorous or beautiful were reserved for the slave market at Antioch; but the aged and infirm<sup>769</sup> were immolated at the altar of cruelty.<sup>770</sup>

<sup>767</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, p. 253.

<sup>768</sup> E. H. Carter, *A History of Britain*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 335-336.

<sup>769</sup> The readers may themselves draw a comparison between the brutal and avaricious act of Bohemond during the conquest of Marrah and of Saladin’s benevolent release of all old men and women after his reoccupation of Jerusalem.

<sup>770</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 229.

The same act of Bohemond was repeated during the conquest of Jerusalem by Tancred with the refugees in the Solomon's temple.

Tancred burst into the Temple, and tore down the golden hangings from the walls — seven thousand marks in weight. He was, perhaps, of a more pitiful turn<sup>771</sup> than most of his compeers, for he offered to protect such as took refuge in Solomon's Temple. But even his charity could only offer a reprieve, and not a full pardon. Weary with slaughter the Christians at length turned their thoughts to sacred things, and went in tearful procession to the Holy Sepulcher. But early next morning their sterner mood revived; the rumour went about that Tancred had been luring the fugitives to their destruction, and the Crusaders armed themselves anew to the work of death. Every one was eager for blood: some stationed at a distance shot the hapless Saracens with their arrows; others scaled the roof of the Temple itself and massacred both men and women with the sword. (...) This terrible slaughter "filled all the city with dead bodies," and the first work of the conquerors was to cleanse the streets of the impurity which might breed a plague. The surviving Saracens were compelled to carry the dead outside the walls, where they were "heaped up in mountains," to be presently destroyed by fire. "Such a slaughter of pagan folk had never been seen or heard of; none knows their number save God alone."<sup>772</sup>

Another report narrating breach of the joint promise of Tancred and Gaston de Bearn at Jerusalem is reported below:

**The Latins, on the day after the victory, massacred three hundred men to whom Tancred and Gaston de Bearn had promised protection, and had given a standard as a warrant for their safety.** Though the religion of Tancred was as cruel as that of his comrades, though his deadly sword had explored every corner of the mosque of Omar, yet he respected the sacredness of his word; and

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<sup>771</sup> The 'more pitiful turn' of Tancred had obviously been a subterfuge against those who relied on his words. In truth, he had been luring the fugitives to their destruction. There, however, could be no surprise in Tancred's turning back from his assurance to the refugees in the temple. His deceitful act did not differ from the usual character of the Christians to back out from their vows or their treaties throughout their history.

<sup>772</sup> T. A. Archer & Charles L. Kingsford, *The Crusades, THE STORY OF THE NATIONS*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 91-92.

nothing but the interposition of the other chiefs prevented him from retaliating on the murderers. It was resolved that no pity should be shewn to the Muselmans; and the most humane justified the determination by the opinion that, in conjunction with the Saracens of Egypt, they might molest the Christians, and recover the city. The subjugated people were therefore, dragged into the public places, and slain as victims. Women with children at the breast, girls and boys, all were slaughtered. The squares, the streets, and even the uninhabited places of Jerusalem again were strewed with the dead bodies of men and women, and the mangled limbs of children. **No heart melted into compassion or expanded into benevolence.** The city was washed, and the melancholy task was performed by some saracenian slaves. No contemporary rejoiced out of general regard to humanity; but every one condemned the count of Tolouse, whose avarice was more alive than his superstition, and whose favourite passion made him save and conduct to Ascalon the only few Muselmans, except the slaves, who escaped the general butchery. **The synagogues were set on fire, and the Jews perished in the flames.**<sup>773</sup>

There had been many other conspicuous examples of the breach of the treaties by the Christians throughout their history in the world. The readers may, however, find a glaring example of forsaking the treaty by the Greek Emperor, the Pope and other Christian authorities exciting Hunyady to forsake the treaty made with Sultan Murad. Exact details have been provided under the topic 'Bestiality of Hunyady' in the forthcoming chapters.

Gibbon, too, provides us with the following details:

**A bloody sacrifice was offered by his mistaken votaries to the God of the Christians:** resistance might provoke, but neither age nor sex could mollify their implacable rage. They indulged themselves three days in a promiscuous massacre; and the infection of the dead bodies produced an epidemical disease. After seventy thousand Moslems had been put to the sword, and the harmless Jews had been burnt in their synagogue, they could still reserve a multitude of captives, whom interest or lassitude persuaded them to spare.<sup>774</sup>

The fate of the multitude of the captives stated above has also been detailed in the following:

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<sup>773</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 259-261.

<sup>774</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. VII, (London: 1821), p. 272.

All the captives whom humanity or the lassitude of carnage had at first spared, all those who had been saved in the hope of a rich ransom, were slaughtered. The Saracens were forced to throw themselves from the tops of towers and houses; they were burnt alive; they were dragged from their subterranean retreats; they were haled to the public places and immolated on piles of the dead. Neither the tears of women, nor the cries of little children, nor the sight of the place where Jesus Christ forgave his executioners, could mollify the victor's passion.<sup>775</sup>

Mills also says "It was resolved that no pity should be shown to the Mussulmans." "The subjugated people were therefore dragged into the public places, and slain as victims. Women with children at the breast, girls and boys, all were slaughtered. The squares, the streets, and even the uninhabited places of Jerusalem, again were strewed with the dead bodies of men and women, and the mangled limbs of children, no heart melted into compassion or expanded into benevolence." As especial objects of malevolence, the Jews were reserved for the worst fate. Their synagogues, into which they were driven, were set on fire, and they all perished in the flames.<sup>776</sup>

A letter from Daimbart, Archbishop of Pisa, to the Pope, also affirms the massacre and revenge of the crusaders at Jerusalem:

**If you desire to know what became of the enemies we found in Jerusalem, know that in the portico of Solomon and in the temple, our soldiers had the vile blood of the Saracens up to the knees of their horses.**<sup>777</sup>

#### ▪ Desecration of the Holy Sites

According to the Muslim traditions, Ka'aba had been the first house of the Lord whereas Jerusalem or Masjid-al-Aqsa had been set up as the second house of the Lord on Earth. The Qur'ān reveals that:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَيْتِ وُضْعَةً لِلثَّالِسِ لِلَّذِي بِكَثَّةِ مُبَارَّكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ

The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at

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<sup>775</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 348. It seems that Jesus' forgiveness did not extend beyond his executioners i.e. the Romans while his followers continued to avenge all bestialities of the Romans on the Jews i.e. the race of Jesus Christ up to 1944 AD.

<sup>776</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 348-349.

<sup>777</sup> ibid, p. 349-350.

Bakka: full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings:<sup>778</sup>

Abu Dharr reported: I said: Messenger of Allah, which mosque was set up first on the earth? He said: Al-Masjid al-Haram (the sacred). I (again) said: Then which next? He said: It was the Masjid Aqsa. I (again) said: How long the space of time (between their setting up)? He (the Holy Prophet) said: It was forty years. And whenever the time comes for prayer, pray there, for that is a mosque; and in the hadith transmitted by Abu Kamil (the words are): "Whenever time comes for prayer, pray, for that is a mosque (for you)."<sup>779</sup>

In the Bible, we read:

**18.** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. **19.** And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: **20.** And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.<sup>780</sup>

The verses quoted above as such describe Melchizedek as priest of the Most High God at Salem. This affirms Salem or Yero Salem as sanctuary of the God since the ancient times.

From Abraham to King Saul, we find no reference to Salem till King David conquered the city mentioned as **Jerusalem of Jebusites in about 1010 B.C.** He declared Jerusalem as the capital of the United Kingdom of Israel. King Solomon built the first temple on the temple mount and since then it became central place of worship for the Israelites.

Although Jerusalem denoted 'the city of peace' or 'abode of peace' [**Shalom**] but in contrast to its name, the ill-fated city ever since the construction of the temple by Solomon had never enjoyed long lasting peace except during the Muslim period i.e. 638 to 1099 and 1087 to 1917 A.D.

The crusaders had waged the holy war to promote the faith and preachings of **Jesus Christ as prince of peace, love and mercy.** They depict him a benevolent

<sup>778</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:96 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>779</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Ch 44, Book 4, Hadith 1056. also Hadith 1057.

<sup>780</sup> Gen 14:18-20 KJV.

person and the savior who gave his life to save all sinners among the mankind. In his sermon on mount, Jesus said:

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (...) Ye are the light of the world. (...).<sup>781</sup>

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;<sup>782</sup>

The idealistic teachings of Jesus preaching humility, love, mercy and tolerance could no where be traced in Christians or the crusaders. They blatantly violated the exhortations of Jesus for repentance and rectitude or other moral imperatives stressed by him. In contrast to his teachings of mercy and forgiveness, they did not spare any people falling their way irrespective of the fact that they were Christians, Jews or the Muslims. By their bestiality and desecration of the sanctuaries at Jerusalem, they exposed their debased instincts than displaying any impact of the teachings of Jesus on them. In spite of all this, they proudly claim their salvation through Jesus who was gracious enough even to pray for the forgiveness of his crucifiers:

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.<sup>783</sup>

No wonder that the Lord accepted the prayer in favor of the Romans who were the actual crucifiers of Jesus. The raiment of Jesus had also been parted by the Roman officials by casting lots. Being absolved from the crime of inflicting torturous and ignoble death on Jesus Christ, the western Christians found them free to transfer the entire guilt to the Jews who continued to pay for the same up to 1940 AD. Muslims too had been the target of the Christian West being inculpated as the 'antichrist'.

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<sup>781</sup> Mat 5:6-7, 14. KJV.

<sup>782</sup> Mat 5:43-44. KJV.

<sup>783</sup> Luk 23:34 KJV.

The crusaders also had no regard for compassionate teachings of Jesus with the sinning brothers.

**21.** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?" **22.** "No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven.<sup>784</sup>

Jerusalem had been the holiest spot on earth for the Jews as well as the Christians. The crusaders should have kept veneration of the city in the manner they took barefooted start from Marra. They, therefore, were obliged to enter the city trembling under the fear of the Almighty. The pride of success had blinded them to such an extent that they desecrated the city with unspeakable violence, mass massacre, rapes and trampling the sanctuaries under the feet of their horses. Overwhelmed by their haughtiness and anger against the Muslims and the Jews, they deliberately turned away from the teachings of Jesus Christ to repeat and surpass the brutal traditions of their Roman ancestors to desecrate, to ravage or to put the city on fire.

#### ▪ **10 Degrees of Holiness**

The Christians had no regard for the teachings of the historic Jesus Christ to his genuine apostles and disciples accompanying him during his life on earth. Instead of following Jesus Christ as the last warner towards the Israelites they themselves elevated him to a god-head i.e. the God in spirit as preached by St. Paul. For the said reason, they attached no importance or sanctity to the holy land, the city of Jerusalem and the temple of the God of Jesus Christ there. As regards the Jews, they had been propagating ten levels of holiness for the land and sanctuaries there. According to them:

The land of Israel is holier than other lands...The walled cities of the land of Israel are still more holy...within the walls of Jerusalem is still more holy...The temple Mount is still more holy...the Court of the Israelites is still more holy...the Court of the Priests is still more holy...the space around the altar is still more holy...the Hekhal is still more holy...the Devir<sup>785</sup> is still

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<sup>784</sup> Mat 18:21-22 GNB.

<sup>785</sup> Holy of Holies.

more holy, for none may enter therein save only the high priest on Yom Kippur.<sup>786</sup>

Imagine how Christ might have been hurt to observe the bestialities and sacrilegious activities of the crusaders as his followers who were expected to be the harbingers of his teachings of love, justice, charity, holiness, piety, forgiveness, mercy and other blessings through establishment of the Kingdom of God by his followers. The crusaders had some veneration for the Holy City only at the time of their moving from Marrah<sup>787</sup> but with the capitulation of the Jerusalem, they set aside all moral values whatsoever. Traditions of Jesus had no importance for them. They forgot that Jesus had taken care to enter the temple area barefooted along his companions. Except the worship of Lord, Jesus did not tolerate any activity there. Mark recorded that:

**15.** And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; **16.** And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. **17.** And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.<sup>788</sup>

Instead of making the sanctuary, the den of thieves, the crusaders made it the den of mass murder and rapine. They desecrated the house of the Lord God of all the nations in the manner that no sanctuary on earth had ever suffered such profanity before the Christian conquest of Jerusalem.

Although King David had made all the preparations for construction of the house of the Lord during his life yet the sanctuary on the Temple Mount could not be completed until the mid of the reign of King Solomon (970-931 BC). Since then, the temple of Solomon and its vicinities stood sanctified as the house of the Lord for all the prophets of Israel including Jesus himself. Jesus,

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<sup>786</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 168.

<sup>787</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 75.

<sup>788</sup> Mar 11:15-17 KJV.

too, affirmed it as 'the house of prayer' for all the nations (Mar 11:17) as also quoted earlier. The city of Jerusalem, therefore, does not owe its sanctity just to the relics of Jesus Christ. It stood sanctified long before the advent of Jesus. Following the prophets of Israel before him, Jesus too had been worshiping the Lord there.

Let us not forget that Jesus was a Jew sent as a messenger and last warner from God towards his own people. As such, he did not admit the gentiles or the Romans among his followers. The Roman gentile followers of St. Paul enjoying blessings of the Roman authorities, succeeded to deprive the Jewish followers of Christ from their inheritance. **Eventually, the Romans not only usurped the land, the authority and the sanctification from the Jews but also the holiness of the race, place and the land. The scriptural languages such as Hebrew and Aramaic spoken by Jesus Christ had no acknowledgment at all. Latin translations of the scriptures replaced the languages of the revelation of the Lord.**

Instead of Jerusalem, Rome became the place of pilgrimage of the Christians. Snatching holiness from the Jewish high priest and others, they conferred all dignity, glory and holiness on the Roman Pontiff and priests under him. Rome became the holy city for all the followers of Christ in the world and the Holy Roman Empire shifted all holiness from Palestine to certain specified parts of Europe. The Christians built magnificent buildings of the church at Constantinople, Rome and innumerable places in Europe and even at places like Antioch in the east but **the site of the house of God at the temple mount remained condemned up to the conquest of Jerusalem by Muslims. God's temple at Jerusalem stood in ruins and heaps of garbage were covering the rock at temple mount when caliph Omer visited the site and himself started to remove the filth from there.** Except for the sepulcher of Jesus Christ, the entire city of Jerusalem was a discarded city with many prohibitions even for the earliest Christians and the Jews. Credit

goes to the Muslims to construct the mosque of Omer and the Dome of the Rock on the temple mount to restore the sanctity of the Holy City.

Apparently the crusaders also claimed to be the people of book and the monotheists. They, however, massacred all the monotheists in the holy land irrespective of the fact that they were Jews or the Muslims. The crusaders turned out the local Christians from Jerusalem on the excuse that they had their sympathies with the Muslims. While doing so, they also discarded the pronouncement of Jesus who had come only to retrieve the last sheep of the house of the Israel i.e. Jews:

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>789</sup>

Jesus was so rigid about it that he forbade his apostles to go to any people except the Israelites:

**5.** These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: **6.** But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.<sup>790</sup>

These were the words of Jesus Christ the man and the holy prophet of the Lord sent towards the Israelites. The addressees were the earliest Jewish followers of Jesus Christ and the apostles chosen by him. After their conversion to Christianity, the western races refused to tolerate any rivals in faith. They started asserting their exclusive rights on Jesus. Roman citizens like St. Paul, therefore, claimed ascendancy over the true companions of Jesus Christ during his life on earth. Hence instead of retrieving the last sheep of Israel, they continued to exterminate them throughout the Christian kingdoms in the West. As descendants of Romans, they proved to be more loyal to Greco-roman authorities, culture and the traditions than to follow the pattern and teachings of Jesus Christ. At Jerusalem, therefore, they repeated the historical atrocities committed thrice by the Romans against the vanquished i.e. during 64 BC, 70 AD and 135

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<sup>789</sup> Mat 15:24 KJV.

<sup>790</sup> Mat 10:5-6 KJV.

AD. All the worshipers of the Almighty in the inner parts as well as the whole extent of the Temple Mount were brutally massacred by them. The law of the Lord and the Holiness of Jerusalem, the primacy of the Jews as the chosen race was usurped by the conquerors and their successors.

Both the historians and the priests did not condemn the anti-Semitism of the crusaders. They rather eulogized them for destroying the race to which Jesus belonged. They also ignored the fact that the prophets of God such as Hud, Swaleh, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses Elijah, David and Jesus Christ had been the Semitics despised by the Western Christendom who instead of calling them Arabs or Muslims denounced them as Saracens. Due to long history of Roman dominance in the east, the Christian west was feeling themselves deprived of their perennial rights to possess the lands and to enslave all people living on the east and south of Mediterranean Sea. Muslims there were taken as the worst offenders in the world to prevent the Roman Christians from their excesses and encroachments in Asia and Africa besides restraining their pride and supremacy in the world. The Christian mobs, therefore, were full of wrath against the occupants of Jerusalem and their vengeance is apparent from the report of a scholar as quoted below:

For three days the Crusaders systematically slaughtered about thirty thousand of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "They killed everyone, whether male or female." Ten thousand Muslims who had sought sanctuary on the roof of the Aqsa were brutally massacred, and Jews were rounded up into their synagogue and put to the sword. There were scarcely any survivors. At the same time, says Fulcher of Chartres, a chaplain in the army, they were cold-bloodedly appropriating property for themselves. "Whoever first entered a house, whether he was rich or poor, was not challenged by any other Franks. He was to occupy and own the house or the palace and whatever he found in it as if it was entirely his own. The Streets literally ran with blood. Piles of heads, hands and feet were to be seen," says the Provencal eyewitness Raymond of Aguilers. He felt no shame: the massacre was a sign of the triumph of Christianity, especially on the Haram: (...) Muslims and Jews were cleared out of the Holy City like

vermin. Eventually there was no one left to kill.<sup>791</sup>

Robert the Monk had proudly asserted that **the crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem was the greatest event in the world history since the crucifixion.** Taking in view the motives of the west, we feel no hesitation to endorse his view. Crucifixion of Jesus the Jew and prophet of Israel was undoubtedly the great success for the Romans while the re-conquest of Jerusalem was the revival of their glory after the elimination of the Western Roman Empire. The Christians, therefore, describe achievement of all their goals by fulfilling the will of God in the following manner:

**A Christian kingdom was raised and the laws, language, and manners of Europe were planted in Palestine.**<sup>792</sup>

Such fulfillment, however, had nothing to do with Jesus Christ or the Lord God worshiped by him. God had deputed Jesus towards his own race i.e. the Aramaic speaking Jews in Palestine. This was so because that traditionally the Lord had been deputing each prophet speaking the language of the people to whom he was sent (Al-Qur'ān 14:4). **Jesus had neither been sent towards the Roman gentiles nor was his mission to replace the Hebrew or the Aramaic laws, language and manners with those of the European nations.** The end result i.e. the restoration of the Christian kingdom in the manner stated above was in fact a mockery of the cause of the Christ. The Christian crusaders had, therefore, inflicted innumerable miseries and cruelties including death of about 3 million human beings i.e. the believers in Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad with a motive conflicting with the mission of Jesus Christ. The Christian horde desecrated the most venerated sanctuaries in the city of God, demolished the buildings, burnt the property and plundered valuables exceeding billions of dollars during the crusades.

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<sup>791</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 274.

<sup>792</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 264.

Hundreds of thousands of women and children were raped or killed irrespective of their gender, age or faith. **All this was done only to establish the Christian kingdom with the laws, language and manners of the European nations.** No doubt Jesus Christ and his followers had been praying that 'Thy Kingdom Come' yet they never had the idea that their prayer will be fulfilled in the manner quoted above.

More than 1160 years after the conquest of Jerusalem and introduction of Roman imperialism in the Holy Land by Pompey the Great in about 63 BC, the western Christian powers re-conquered the ill-fated city to repeat the brutal actions of the Romans and to reintroduce the law, the language and the Hellenistic culture in the Holy Land. **The Romans had crucified or killed hundreds of Jewish leaders including Jesus Christ during the reign of Augustus (r. 27 BC to 14 AD) merely to abolish the law and worship of one God and to establish Roman supremacy in the Holy Land.** Conquest of Jerusalem, therefore, did not bring the long awaited kingdom of God. **It, however, succeeded to revive the Greco-Roman culture and faith with introduction of tritheism within the polytheism.** It is, however, strange that in spite of worshiping hundreds and perhaps thousands of their saints besides Jesus Christ, they pretend to be monotheists.

Muslims believe that the Lord God had not committed any mistake to give birth to Jesus Christ in an Aramaic speaking Jewish family of Palestine. Although Jewish community had been the primary assignment of Jesus yet he could have welcomed the gentiles to become his followers. The gentiles neither had any right to confiscate the holiness, the law and the land from the Jews nor to usurp the prerogatives of the Lord God of Moses and Jesus to confer the same on the pontiffs and priests appointed by the Christians themselves. Similarly, the concept of Kingdom of God enforcement of His law throughout the land was the main object of Jesus Christ who repeatedly stressed that:

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of

the law to fail.<sup>793</sup>

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.<sup>794</sup>

Alas! Instead of believing in the word of Jesus, the so-called Christians in Europe relied much more in the preachings of St. Paul, the Roman citizen and the self-claimed visionary apostle of Jesus towards the Gentiles. It was he who boldly contradicted the word of Christ by asserting that:

For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes is put right with God.<sup>795</sup>

These blasphemous words quoted find no support from the Old Testament or the sayings of Jesus Christ. In spite of this, St. Paul arrogantly uttered that:

Those who depend on obeying the Law live under a curse.  
(...)<sup>796</sup>

And so the Law was in charge of us until Christ came, in order that we might then be put right with God through faith.<sup>797</sup>

The words of St. Paul quoted above actually aimed at nullifying the teachings of Jesus Christ and his preachings for unifying all people throughout the Roman Empire by making them compliant of the Roman Law instead of the law of Moses, Jesus and other prophets. No one among the gentile Christians ever thought about the fact that there could be no Kingdom of God without strict imposition of His law. Anyhow, St. Paul did well to abrogate the law of the Lord to introduce his Catholicism so that his followers may pay wholehearted obedience to the temporal authorities and the law of the Romans. For details please refer to Rom 13:1-7 and Titus 2:9-10 & 3:1.

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<sup>793</sup> Luk 16:17 KJV.

<sup>794</sup> Mat 5:18 KJV.

<sup>795</sup> Rom 10:4 GNB.

<sup>796</sup> Gal 3:10 GNB.

<sup>797</sup> Gal 3:24 GNB.

## ▪ **Carrying the Cross**

Addressing a crowd and his disciples, Jesus had said:

(...) If any of you want to come with me," he told them, "you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me.<sup>798</sup>

No doubt the crusaders literally took the cross yet instead of following Jesus Christ, the misguided horde preferred to follow their own lusts, manners and the morals of the religious perverts. They had anticipated immediate appearance of antichrist and the battles of the last days. Karen Armstrong reports that:

But the Crusaders themselves were nothing if not practical, and before any of these apocalyptic triumph occurred, the city had to be cleared up. William of Tyre says that the bodies were burned with great efficiency so that the Crusaders could make their way to the holy places with greater confidence"- without, presumably, suffering the inconvenience of tripping over severed limbs. But in fact the task was too great, and **bodies were still lying around the city five months later.** When Fulcher of Chartres arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate Christmas that year, he was horrified:

Oh, what a stench there was around the walls of the city, both within and without, from the rotting bodies of the Saracens slain by ourselves at the time of the capture of the city, lying wherever they had been hunted down.

Overnight, the Crusaders had turned the thriving and populous city of Jerusalem into a stinking charnel house. There were still piles of putrefying corpses in the streets when the Crusaders held a market three days after the massacre. With great festivities and celebrations, they sold their loot, blithely unconcerned about the carnage they had inflicted and the hideous evidence lying at their feet. **If a respect for the sacred rights of their predecessors is a test of the integrity of any monotheistic conqueror of Jerusalem, the Crusaders must come at the bottom of anybody's list.**<sup>799</sup>

Her observation in the last sentence of the narrative quoted above is enough to expose the true aspects of the moral and religious decadence of the crusaders pretending to wage the holy war in the name of Christ the savior and the prince of love and peace for the humankind.

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<sup>798</sup> Mar 8:34 GNB.

<sup>799</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 275.

## ▪ A Violent Cleansing

Although most of the historians since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century do not applaud the actions of the crusaders yet in the earlier times the bishops as well as the historians have been admiring the atrocities of the crusaders especially, during the sack of Jerusalem. An instance of the same is quoted in the following:

It was normal practice in 11<sup>th</sup>-century warfare for an army to loot a city it had conquered after a long siege. The attack on the inhabitants of Jerusalem had an extra intensity, fuelled as it was by papal and priestly rhetoric about the need to sweep the city clean of 'Saracens'. After the killing, the soldiers and pilgrims piously gave thanks to God in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. **Fulcher of Chartres presented the dreadful slaughter as a purgative cleansing: 'O day so fiercely longed for! .. O deed above all other deeds! ... [the crusaders] desired that this place, for so long made unclean by the pagan practices of its inhabitants, should be cleaned of its filth.**<sup>800</sup>

Such writers who allege pagan practices to the Muslims and the Jews fail to quote any instances of the same. Factually, they themselves had discarded the Unitarian faith of Jesus Christ. They preferred to follow the pagan myths, traditions and practices of the Romans and the Greeks. Instead of worshiping one and the only Lord God of universe, they were worshiping the images of Jesus Christ and hundreds of their saints. Besides the idols, they also worshiped the Holy Spirit, the cross and the relics of the saints. Now it is for the readers to differentiate pagan practices and filth from the pure worship of the God worshiped by all the prophets from Adam to Jesus and Muhammad (pbAh).

A note on page 81 of the book reads that:

In the heat of the moment, bloodlust took over from pious righteousness, and one act of barbarity was followed by another.<sup>801</sup>

"They killed all the Saracens and the Turks they found," says the author of the *Gesta*, "they killed everyone whether male

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<sup>800</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 81.

<sup>801</sup> ibid, p. 81.

or female." The day after the massacre, **Crusaders climbed to the roof of al-Aqsa and in cold blood they killed a group of Muslims to whom Tancred had granted sanctuary.** The Muslims were no longer respected enemies and a foil for Frankish honor. They had become the enemies of God and were thus doomed to ruthless extermination. They were polluting this Holy City and had to be eliminated like vermin, and from this point in the jargon of crusading **the word given to Muslims is "filth."** The famous eyewitness account of Raymund of Aguiles shows the Joshuan spirit in which this massacre was accomplished:

"Wonderful sights were to be seen. Some of our men (and this was more merciful) cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers; others tortured them longer by casting them into the flames. Piles of heads, hands, and feet were to be seen in the streets of the city. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. But these were small matters compared to what happened at the Temple of Solomon, a place where religious services are ordinarily chanted. What happened there? If I tell the truth, it will exceed your powers of belief. So let it suffice to say this much, at least, **that in the Temple and porch of Solomon, men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins.** Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies".<sup>802</sup>

The narrative given above reminds us of the tradition of Pompey who, in 64/63 B.C., promised Aristobulus and Hyrcanus to visit Jerusalem. Unwilling to receive Pompey at Jerusalem Aristobulus excited his companions to defend the city. John M. Allegro narrates that:

It was three months before the Romans were able to break through on the temple mount from the north (War I vii 4 149). The honour of being the first to enter the sacred precinct fell to one Faustus Cornelius, closely followed by two centurions and their companies. They formed a circle round the temple court and systematically butchered everyone therein. **The priests, we are told, went on with their sacrifices and other religious rites to the end, being cut down even as they poured the libations and burned the incense, "putting the worship of the deity above their own preservation"** any that did escape the holocaust within the temple area "perished by their countrymen of the opposite

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<sup>802</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (New York: Anchor Books, 2001) p. 178-179.

faction".<sup>803</sup>

Another writer described the episode in words reproduced below:

He took Jerusalem after a three-month siege, slaughtering twelve thousand Jews. He took advantage of the Sabbath day, attacking ferociously when he knew the observant Jews would be less inclined to fight. He and his staff dared to enter the inner sanctum of the Jewish temple--the "Holy of Holies," a small curtained chamber that housed the Ark of the Covenant in ancient times. According to the Torah only the high priest was allowed to enter this room and only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). In an ironic twist of history Josephus says that Pompey's violation of the Temple fell on the "day of the fast," or Yom Kippur. Perhaps more than any other, **this single act epitomized Roman arrogance and power.**<sup>804</sup>

The western Christendom, however, far surpassed the arrogance and the power play of the Romans under Pompey. During the crusades, their targets had been the Jews and the Muslims both claiming themselves to be the people of book. They were the monotheists whom the Christians, mythologists and polytheists denounced as pagans or filthy people. It was due to the Christian haughtiness that they denied their enemies to be the creatures of the same one and the only Lord God of the universe. The crusaders proved to be worse than the ancient Romans in the sense that the Romans acknowledged no Gods while the Christians were killing the people belonging to the race of Jesus Christ and those who worshiped the God of Jesus and all prophets before him. In their extreme exhilaration and pride, they did not pause for a moment to think that their killing of their enemies, peaceful citizens including children and women was exactly opposite of the teachings of the master. Like the Jews of the old, they too, were stiff-necked people who refused to obey the commandments of the Lord and indulged into sacrilegious acts in the city

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<sup>803</sup> The Chosen People, Pg. 128.

<sup>804</sup> James D. Tabor, *The Jesus Dynasty*, (New York: Simon & Schuster,) pg. 95.

of God. Here is another description of the massacre committed by the crusaders at Jerusalem:

This Killing was not just an ordinary battle of conquest; the Crusaders had fallen upon the Muslims of Jerusalem and slain them like the avenging angels of the Apocalypse. It was a judgment of God himself. It was a salvation like the salvation that God had effected at the Red Sea when he slaughtered the whole army of the Egyptians, a violent and ruthless separation of the just and the unjust. The Crusade had indeed become a holy war. The holy journey had ended in a righteous battle against evil in which the soldiers of Christ killed some 40,000 Muslims in two days.<sup>805</sup>

The Christians as well as the Jews have developed the habit of attributing all their wickedness as the judgment of the Lord. Christians even felt themselves free to determine their own salvation and punishments for their enemies. How far they are correct will be known only on the Day of Judgment.

### ▪ ***The City is Stripped***

Although there had been great propaganda about the missionary zeal and selfless devotion of the crusaders to defend and to promote the Christian faith yet their true motive and achievement can be assessed from the following:

The account given by Fulcher of Chartres describes how crusaders ran into deserted houses and seized whatever they found Whoever was first into a building was able to claim it – ‘in this way, many poor folk became rich’. For it was a frenzy of greed, as well as of bloodletting. According to the *Gesta Francorum*, ‘The crusaders seized silver and gold, mules and horses, and buildings full of all manner of riches.’<sup>806</sup>

### ▪ ***After the Victory***

In the immediate aftermath of the slaughter of 15-16 July, the crusaders had had to deal with cleaning the city, since the piles of corpses made such a terrible stench. The *Gesta Francorum* Reports that the bodies of the Saracens were

<sup>805</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (New York: Anchor Books, 2001) p. 179.

<sup>806</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 81.

dragged out of the city and burned in huge pyramids. The smoke hung over the city in a dreadful pall.<sup>807</sup>

Karen Armstrong reports that:

**After the conquest of Jerusalem, the crusaders promulgated a law banning Jews and Muslims from the Holy City; the local Christians were also expelled,** because the Crusaders suspected them of complicity with Islam. To the unsophisticated Westerners, these Palestinian, Coptic, and Syrian Christians seemed indistinguishable from Arabs. However holy the city, few of the Franks wanted to live in Jerusalem, now only a shadow of its former self. Most preferred the coastal towns, where life was easier and there were more opportunities for trade and commerce. Immediately after the conquest, **Godfrey moved into the Aqsa Mosque, which became the royal residence**, and he converted the Dome of the Rock into a church called the "Temple of the Lord."<sup>808</sup>

It has been further reported that:

**Daimbert made the "Temple of the Lord" his official residence.** The importance of the Harem to the crusaders can be seen by the fact that the patriarch and his advocate chose to live in this lonely outpost which was far away from the main crusader quarters on the western hill.<sup>809</sup>

The acts of the crusaders narrated above may suffice to show the veneration of the Christians for the house of the Lord where Jesus had been praying throughout his life. Due to extermination of the Muslims as well as the Jews together with the expulsion of the local Christians from the city, it had become desolate. No monotheist was left alive to worship the Lord God of Jesus and of all the prophets before him. The triumph of the Crusaders, therefore, culminated in utter devastation of the holy city, the elimination of the worshipers of the Almighty and desolation of the sanctuaries devoted to the worship of the Lord God. Armstrong writes that:

The crusaders' chief problem was manpower. Once Jerusalem had been won, most of their soldiers went home, leaving only a skeleton army behind. Jerusalem was particularly desolate.

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<sup>807</sup> ibid, p. 82.

<sup>808</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 276-277.

<sup>809</sup> ibid, p. 277.

**It had recently housed about 100,000 people,** but now only a few hundred lived in the empty ghostly city. As William of Tyre said, “the people of our country were so few in number and so needy that they scarcely filled one street.” They huddled together for security in the Patriarch’s Quarter around the Holy Sepulcher. The rest of the city remained uninhabited, its streets dangerously haunted by prowlers and Bedouin who broke into the empty houses. Jerusalem could not be adequately defended: when Godfrey led his soldiers on a raid, there were only a few noncombatants and pilgrims left to ward off an attack.<sup>810</sup>

## The Second Crusade

During the second crusade in 1146, preachers like Bernard of Clairvaux took upon them to preach crusades with more dramatic effectiveness. He exhorted them to “share in the suffering of Christ; what pain and difficulty they had to endure en route to victory would only improve the effectiveness of the enterprise in winning salvation for them.” Preachers, throughout Europe continued to excite the people to recapture the County of Edessa that fell to the Muslims in 1144.

## The Third Crusade

The Third Crusade (1189–1192), also known as The Kings' Crusade, was an attempt by European leaders to re-conquer the Holy Land from Saladin.

Gregory VIII issued a bull for a third Crusade, and all Europe flew to arms. Frederic Barbarossa came from Germany, Philip Augustus from France, and Richard Coeur de Lion from England. **Their armies amounted to hundreds of thousands.**<sup>811</sup>

**This crusade was as vain as its predecessor. Barbarossa was drowned in a Syrian stream.** Richard Coeur de Lion performed prodigies of valor, but was outwitted by Saladin. He sighted Jerusalem without being able to attack it, and finally signed a treaty with the Sultan, which allowed the Christians to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and exempted them from taxation. Saladin generously granted, at the request of the bishop of Salisbury, the establishment of Latin priests at the

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<sup>810</sup> ibid, p. 276.

<sup>811</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 361.

Holy Sepulchre, and at Bethlehem and Nazareth. (...) Like other Crusades, this one was marked by the grossest debauchery. While the French king was encamped before Ptolemaïs, and his army was a prey to famine and disease, they indulged in the worst excesses. Three hundred women arrived from Cyprus and the Greek islands, and prostituted themselves in the Christian camp, while the Saracens beheld the spectacle with disgust. **Michaud sums up the depravity of the soldiers of the cross by saying that all the vices of Europe and Asia had met in one spot.**<sup>812</sup>

Although this campaign included the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa), Richard I of England (Richard the Lionheart) and King Phillip II of France with 20000 knights yet except for reversing some of the Saladin's conquests temporarily, it failed to capture Jerusalem. The crusade was, therefore, a miserable failure of the crusaders. It has been commented that:

The gains of the third Crusade were exceedingly trivial. Ptolemaïs was captured, and Ascalon demolished. For this Germany lost a great emperor and a fine army, and other countries suffered in proportion. **Out of six hundred thousand Crusaders scarcely a hundred thousand returned to their native lands.**<sup>813</sup>

Finding no hope to reoccupy Jerusalem, Richard preferred to end the expedition after negotiating a treaty with Saladin as described earlier.

## The 4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Crusades

### ▪ ***The Sack of Constantinople***

During the fourth crusade in 1203 the crusaders sacked Constantinople. It has been reported that:

The Fourth Crusade's diversion to Constantinople, officially performed to restore the deposed Emperor Isaac II Angelus to the imperial throne, degenerated into a full-scale attack on the city, followed by three lawless days of rampant looting. The greed-driven ransacking of this historic Christian city must rival **the savage slaughter of inhabitants of**

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<sup>812</sup> ibid, p. 362.

<sup>813</sup> ibid, p. 363-364.

**Jerusalem in 1099 as the nadir<sup>814</sup> of the entire crusading era.** (...) Piety was nowhere to be found as the crusaders ran amok in the historic city of Constantinople, looting drinking, raping and wrecking treasures they could not carry.<sup>815</sup>

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> siege of Constantinople, the crusaders again took the city on 13/4/1204. It has been stated that:

The army was allowed three days of looting. They went on the rampage, committing murder and rape, stealing indiscriminately, ransacking churches, destroying ancient objects of art, and taking sacred relics. Drunken soldiers were joined in the looting by knights, noblemen, priests and bishops. According to Geoffrey of Villehardouin, more booty was seized in the sacking of Constantinople than ever before in the entire history of the world.<sup>816</sup>

The Authors of the '*Crimes of Christianity*' also record that:

Gibbon devotes a magnificent chapter to this Crusade, which, instead of attacking the infidel, turned its arms against Constantinople, and subverted the Greek empire. Before the city was carried, it suffered from the bigotry of some Flemish pilgrims. "In one of their visits to the city they were scandalised by the aspect of a mosque or a synagogue, in which one God was worshipped, without a partner or a son. Their effectual mode of controversy was to attack the infidels with the sword, and their habitation with fire; but the infidels, and some Christian neighbors, presumed to defend their lives and properties; and the flames which bigotry had kindled consumed the most orthodox and innocent structures. During eight days and nights the conflagration spread above a league in front, from the harbor to the Propontis, over the thickest and most populous regions of the city."<sup>817</sup>

Constantinople was the capital city of a Christian empire, but the Crusaders sacked it as though it were inhabited by Saracens. The Crusaders put to the sword every Greek they met with on entering the city. "It was a horrible spectacle," says old Villehardouin, "to see women and young children running distractedly here and there, trembling and half-dead with fright, lamenting piteously, and begging for mercy.

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<sup>814</sup> Abyss, lowest point, depth of despair.

<sup>815</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 162.

<sup>816</sup> *ibid*, p. 163.

<sup>817</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 364-365.

The scenes of female violation," says Mills, "need not be described." According to Gibbon, "Pope Innocent III accuses the pilgrims of respecting, in their lust, neither age, nor sex, nor religious profession; and bitterly laments that the deeds of darkness, fornication, adultery, and incest, were perpetrated in open day; and that **noble matrons and holy nuns were polluted by the grooms and peasants of the Catholic camp.**" **The Crusaders were insensible to pity.** For several days they enacted the worst scenes of outrage and spoliation, within and without the walls of Constantinople. "Villages, churches, and country houses," says Michaud, "were all devastated and given over to pillage. A distracted crowd covered the roads, and wandered about at hazard, pursued by fear, bending under fatigue, and uttering cries of despair."

Constantinople was not the only place where the crusaders wrought desolation and disaster to promote the cause of the Christ. Wherever they went they spared neither the Christians nor the Jews or the Muslims. Enjoying full liberty from any religious or moral constraints, they not only robbed the citizens of money and the goods but also raped the women irrespective of their age, or faith.

About the same crusade, it has been recorded that:

The German garrison at Jaffa was massacred by the Saracens while "celebrating the feast of St. Martin with every excess of drunkenness and debauchery." While besieging the castle of Thoron the warriors of the cross gave themselves up to their usual vices. Men who had left their wives to fight for Christ attached themselves to the vilest prostitutes; **in fact, "the vices and disorders of the Crusaders were so disgraceful that the authors of the old chronicles blush whilst they retrace the picture of them.**<sup>818</sup>

The fifth Crusade was proclaimed in A.D. 1200 by Innocent III, who simply wanted to raise money "for the gratification of his luxury and avarice. There also had been other crusades such as the 6<sup>th</sup> (1236 A.D.), the 7<sup>th</sup> (1234 A.D.), the 8<sup>th</sup> (1245 A.D.) and the 9<sup>th</sup> (1271-72 AD) and many other expeditions all of which ended in vain. After the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Muhammad II in 1452, we find no significant expedition

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<sup>818</sup> ibid, p. 364.

of the crusaders except the one joined by the Jenoise and the French who arrived at the coast of Barbary and laid siege to the city of Africa. The people of the city failed to understand reasons for the assault. In utter confusion, they sent their envoys to the invaders to know the reason for the attack.

The Duke of Bourbon called a council of the principle leaders and after a full deliberation the following answer was returned:

"Those who demand why war is made against them, must know that **their lineage and race put to death and crucified the Son of God, named Jesus Christ**, and that we wish to avenge upon them this fact and evil deed. Further, they do not believe in the holy baptism, nor in the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ; and all these things being considered is why we hold the Saracens and all their sect as enemies.<sup>819</sup>

### ▪ ***The Age of Absurdity and Fable***

One of the writers had observed that *the last and worst result of the Crusades was the growth of superstition and fanaticism*. With equal fineness and truth Gibbon also concludes that:

"The principle of the crusades was a savage fanaticism; and the most important effects were analogous to the cause. Each pilgrim was ambitious to return with his sacred spoils, the relics of Greece and Palestine; and each relic was preceded and followed by a train of miracles and visions. The belief of the Catholics was corrupted by new legends, their practice by new superstitions; and the establishment of the Inquisition, the mendicant orders of monks and friars, the last abuse of indulgences, and the final progress of idolatry, flowed from the baleful fountain of the holy war. The active spirit of the Latins preyed on the vitals of their reason and religion; and if the ninth and tenth centuries were the times of darkness, the thirteenth and fourteenth were the age of absurdity and fable."<sup>820</sup>

Fighting the infidel abroad heightened the spirit of bigotry, and sharpened the sword against the heretic at home. Jortin remarks that the thirteenth century saw "hanging and burning

<sup>819</sup> ibid, p. 376-77.

<sup>820</sup> Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. VII, (London: 1821), p. 421-422.

for God's sake become the universal practice.<sup>821</sup>

The facts brought on record so far leave no doubt that the Christian world had severely suffered from loss of millions of lives and property worth billions of dollars without any achievement in the physical or the spiritual realms. Their moral depravity had touched the lowest in the world. In spite of all this, we cannot term the crusading operations as having gone waste. Factually, the revival of western imperialism had been the burning desire of the Christian west ever since the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The pretensions of saving the holy sepulcher, restoration of the kingdom of God and eradication of evil had been of secondary importance. With the hectic efforts of the popes and the priests and many Christian knights, entire nations of the West had risen up in arms. The Vikings, the knights and all naval fleets of the Western nations were in full preparation but the circumstances did not favor them. **The failure in the crusades, therefore, diverted the Christian powers towards worldwide exploration and navigation in search of more lands and wealth for them.** Having learnt to leave the life of comfort and luxury at home in search of new ventures, they soon started discovering new lands and colonizing the same. The failures of Europe during 800 to 1500 AD were therefore, profoundly rewarded by the Lord God to make the Christian West the masters of the world. We shall, therefore, be narrating the period of colonization and establishment of the world empires by the Christian nations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume of the book.

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<sup>821</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 388-389.



## CHRISTIAN HEROES OF THE CRUSADING PERIOD

Although both the Jews and the Christians continued to pretend their moral superiority over other nations in the world and especially over the Muslims yet there can be no denial of the fact that the teachings in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament hardly attached much importance to magnanimity, mercy, truth, justice and moral uprightness of the believers. There had been no teachings for relieving miseries of the oppressed people especially the slaves. This observation may seem too bold to many of the readers yet the fact remains that the Old Testament had usually been favoring the Israelites and their acquisition of wealth, power and domination than promotion of justice, uprightness and kind treatment with other human beings on earth. A few instances may suffice to elucidate the point.

The Old Testament blamed Noah to be the first man to plant a vineyard, to make wine and to lie naked in his tent in drunkenness. Although his son Ham had blundered into the tent to see him in that condition yet on becoming sober, Noah did not curse Ham his son but transferred the guilt arbitrarily to Canaan son of Ham.<sup>822</sup> No one ever questioned the moral justification for cursing Canaan for the misdeed attributed to Ham.

In stead of showing any disgust against the shameful wife lending by Abraham to pharaoh, the Old Testament appraises the wealth he received in exchange for the chastity of Sarah. Instead of decrying the spineless and immoral conduct ascribed to Abraham the Genesis hastens to mention the valuable attainments of worldly wealth by Abraham at the cost of great moral

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<sup>822</sup> Gen 9:20-28.

degradation on his part. Genesis rather appreciates Abraham's treachery to obtain wealth from the pharaoh:

And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.<sup>823</sup>

Similarly, the OT again appraised the increase in valuable gain of Abraham at the cost of chastity of Sarah lent to king Abimelech.

And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and women servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.<sup>824</sup>

The OT also did not despise Lot or his daughters for incest between them. It also appreciates the crudest and callous treatment of Sarah and Abraham with Hagar and her son Ishmael.<sup>825</sup> God does not punish Jacob and his mother Rebecca for cheating Isaac to deprive Esau from his birthright and blessings of the Lord lawfully belonging to him.<sup>826</sup> Jacob takes no action against Reuben his firstborn for his incestuous intercourse with his step mother. No disapproval has been shown against the incest between Judah and Tamar. Instead of denouncing the illegitimacy of the sons of Tamar, the OT proudly presents them as fore-fathers of the Holy Race as well as the ancestors of the kings of Israel. They also enjoy the unique privilege of being the ancestors of Jesus Christ. Moral perversion, therefore, did not affect the holiness of the blessed line of the kings and the prophets of Israel.

There is yet the account of Rahab<sup>827</sup> the harlot who becomes sanctified and ennobled woman to be an ancestress of the royal line of the Jewish community and ultimately the holy ancestress of Jesus Christ.<sup>828</sup> Again

<sup>823</sup> Gen 13:2 KJV.

<sup>824</sup> Gen 20:14 KJV.

<sup>825</sup> Gen 21:9-21.

<sup>826</sup> Gen 25:27-34, & Gen Ch. 26.

<sup>827</sup> Jos 2:1, 3, 6:17-25, Heb 1:5, 11:31, James 2:25.

<sup>828</sup> Rahab the Amorite prostitute of Jericho had helped the spies of Joshua. Subsequently, she became wife of Selman one of the two spies and became the mother of Boaz who married Ruth from whose son Obid, Jessie the father of David was born. King David was the ancestor of Jesus Christ. Mathew 1:5. Christian writers claim that Salmen was a prince of the house of Judah, and thus Rahab, the one time heathen harlot, married into one of the leading families of

we find God conniving at the unlawful attempt of Ruth to entice Boaz (Ruth Ch. 3) the father of Obid who fathered Jessie the father of King David (1Chr 2:12). Then comes the filthy story of Bathsheba described in chapter 11 of 2 Sam and 1 King Ch. 1 and 2. According to the OT, King David had to cover his crime by contriving for the death of Uriah the Hittite i.e. the former Husband of Bathsheba. David then married her. The first and the illegitimate son from Bathsheba died during his suckling period and King Solomon had been the second issue of David from her.

Chapter 13 of 2 Sam has been devoted to describe in detail the incest between Amnon and Tamar the son and daughter of King David. David also takes no action against Amnon. All such stories and many others show that the Israelites had mainly been concerned with their worldly power and wealth at the cost of moral values and obedience to the commandments of the Lord. Jonathan Kirsch, therefore, observes that:

[T]he story of Lot and his desperate daughters ought to be told in a Yiddish accent," observes one dramatist who turned the story of Lot and his daughters into a stage play, "ending with: 'So, after all that work what happened? Their kids were goyim!'" When it comes to the forbidden sexual union of father and daughters, however, the biblical storyteller is straight-faced and even solemn. Neither Lot nor his daughters are criticized in the Bible or the religious literature that tries to explain away their sexual misadventures in that mountain cave overlooking at blasted Sodom. For his part, Lot is regarded as wholly innocent of what happens after his daughters ply him with wine and send him into a drunken stupor: "Lot is the victim, rather than the instigator, of this disgraceful affair," says one commentator. And even his daughters, as we shall see, are regarded as heroines rather than seductresses. Incest, the biblical author seems to suggest, is hardly the worst offense against the moral order, especially when survival of the species, the kingship of Israel, and the birth of the Messiah appear to be at stake.<sup>829</sup>

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Israel and became an ancestress of our Lord. For other foreign actresses i.e. Tamar, Ruth and Bathsheba, see article *Rahab*.

<sup>829</sup> Jonathan Kirsch, *The Harlot by the Side of the Road*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 41.

It is, therefore, obvious that the Jews as well as Christians continued to follow the traditions of the Old Testament to determine their heroes on the basis of their victories or worldly benefits irrespective of their cruelties, crimes against humanity, immoralities and genocide committed by them.

Exodus blames both the Lord and Moses for depriving the Egyptians of their gold and silver jewelry under the pretension of borrowing the same.<sup>830</sup> Instead of disapproving the usurpation as an immoral act, the Bible seems to display it as a Divine guidance to amass wealth. God is reported having said to Moses:

**2.** Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. **3.** And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people.<sup>831</sup>

**35.** And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: **36.** And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.<sup>832</sup>

The Christians as successors of the Israelites also had little concern with moral characters of the nation. Victory, power, land and wealth had been the goal of their life. They attached hardly any value to their words, treaties, justice or truth. Killing others without any justification had never been considered as crime. The Christians used to follow St. Paul who said:

**7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?**  
**8. And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come?** whose damnation is just.<sup>833</sup>

Here is another version of the verses quoted above:

**7. But what if my untruth serves God's glory by making his**

<sup>830</sup> Exo 11:2-3, 12:35-36.

<sup>831</sup> Exo 11:2-3 KJV.

<sup>832</sup> Exo 12:35-36 KJV.

<sup>833</sup> Rom 3:7-8 KJV.

truth stand out more clearly? Why should I still be condemned as a sinner? **8.** Why not say, then, "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Some people, indeed, have insulted me by accusing me of saying this very thing! They will be condemned, as they should be.<sup>834</sup>

St. Paul's preachings, therefore, suggested that God's truth needed the support of the lies of St. Paul for His glory to flourish. Like certain other innovations, St. Paul's ethics differed from all the prophets, saints and sages of the world. The Qur'ān emphatically stresses on truth by laying down that:

**69.** say: "Those who invent a lie against Allah will never prosper. **70.** a Little enjoyment In This world!- and then, to us will be their return, then shall we make them taste the severest penalty for their blasphemies.<sup>835</sup>

As such teachings of faith and traditions become useless unless and until they are based entirely on truth. Any religion containing amalgamation of truth and untruth has no value at all. Similarly, Paul's teachings showing evil as the necessary prerequisite for the coming of good differs from the universally accepted values. Such concepts of St. Paul aim at demolishing all the religious faith and structure from Adam to Jesus Christ. His preachings imply that God's truth had no legs to stand. Some crutches or a pedestal of untruth as provided by St. Paul was necessary to support or exhibit the truth of God.

The matter had been entirely different for the Muslims. A true Muslim has no permission to usurp properties, lands, women or any other valuables of the weaker people. Their fights had never been prompted to obtain more lands, properties or the slaves. To kill people indiscriminately, to destroy properties or trees, to rape women, to put on fire or to plunder the citizens had never been permissible to the Muslim heroes of war. The Christians, however, had always been free from all such moral restraints. They used to act upon the advise of St. Paul "*Let us do evil so that good may come*". This was

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<sup>834</sup> Rom 3:7-8 GNB.

<sup>835</sup> Al-Qur'ān 10:69-70 Yusuf Ali.

the basis due to which the Christians could wage war, to commit genocide, plunder, injustice, cruelties and all types of immoralities to enforce the Kingdom of God by establishing the western Christian rule on earth. The matter was entirely different for the Muslims. They could wage war only to defend themselves or to eliminate evil from the world. Muslims, therefore, fought for defending their faith, their sanctuaries their lives and the lands held by them. David Nicolle refers to the same guiding principles in his remarks in the following:

The Islamic concept of Jihad is complex and cannot be translated simply as "holy war." It was based on the idea of **struggle against evil; the highest form of jihad being an individual's lifelong attempt to resist temptation and live a moral life.**<sup>836</sup>

The said principle had, therefore, been the guiding factor for all Muslim expeditions. The Christians, however, had many other motives such as spreading imperialism, getting more lands, plundering the helpless people, increasing their wealth, individual show of chivalrous activities and venturesome activities unrestrained by any moral values whatsoever. Christian heroes, as such, had been fighting for motives entirely different from those of the Muslims.

The first crusades started in 1096. These were joined by various people at different times and places. There also had been many leaders such as Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin of Boulogne, Raymond of Toulouse, Bohemond of Taranto, Robert of Flanders, Stephen of Blois, Peter the Hermit, Tancred, Fulk of Anjou and others. Nothing had been conspicuous about any of them. Their entire credit was in capitulating and destroying many of the Christian towns and territories, the Jewish communities in Europe and the Muslim towns such as Nicaea, Antioch, Ascalon and Edessa etc in Muslim Asia. Their crowning victory had been the conquest of Jerusalem accompanied by the unprecedented inhumanities, destruction, arsonage and desecration of the sanctuaries unheard of anywhere other than Jerusalem in the history of man. Although the pretenders of victory claimed

<sup>836</sup> David Nicolle, *Historical Atlas of the Islamic World*, p. 112.

themselves to be distinguished chivalrous knights of western Christendom **yet none of the so called victors had any merits or nobility of a chivalrous knight.** Tancred for example despoiled the Solomon's temple and broke his oath to protect the Muslims or the Jews taking refuge in the temple. For details please refer to '*Repeated Breach of Promise*' in chapter '*The Crusaders at Jerusalem & Constantinople*'.

A glimpse of the collective characters of the crusaders has been provided in the following:

Such was the conquest of Jerusalem by the bloody warriors of the cross. **There is no blacker chapter in the world's history;** and although the genius of Tasso has adorned the first Crusade and embellished its leaders, justice condemns the expedition as wicked and insane, and truth brands alike the soldiers and their chiefs as the vilest horde of **pious savages that ever polluted the earth.**<sup>837</sup>

For ready reference, therefore, we shall be presenting a brief account of some of the most important Christian heroes of the crusades in the following.

## Godfrey of Bouillon

Godfrey the lord of Bouillon (1060-1100) was a Medieval Frankish knight who was one of the leaders of first crusades from 1096 until his death. He was responsible for the most frightful sufferings of the crusading men and women as described under the title '*Towards Antioch*' in our chapter '*Propagation and the Invasions*'.

Godfrey took out loans on most of his lands or sold them to the bishop of Liege and bishop of Worden. With this money he gathered thousands of knights to fight in the Holy Land. It has been reported that:

It was in Jerusalem that the legend of Godfrey of Bouillon was born. The army reached the city in June 1099 and built a wooden siege tower (from lumber provided by some Italian sailors who intentionally scrapped their ships) to get over the walls. The major attack took place on July 14 and 15, 1099. Godfrey and some of his knights were the first to take the

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<sup>837</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 350.

walls and enter the city.<sup>838</sup>

Godfrey also had the privilege to become the first ruler of Jerusalem. About him, it has been reported that:

Godfrey moved into Aqsa Mosque which became the royal residence and he converted the Dome of the Rock into a church called the temple of the Lord.<sup>839</sup>

Contrasting Godfrey and Tancred with Salah al-Din and the Muslims, Lane Poole writes that:

Thus did the Saracens show mercy to the fallen city. One recalls the savage conquest by the first Crusaders in 1099, when Godfrey and Tancred rode through streets choked with the dead and dying, when defenceless Moslems were tortured, burnt, and shot down in cold blood on the towers and roof of the Temple, when the blood of wanton massacre defiled the honour of Christendom and stained the scene where once the gospel of love and mercy had been preached. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" was a forgotten beatitude when the Christians made shambles of the Holy City. Fortunate were the merciless, for they obtained mercy at the hands of the Moslem Sultan.

"The greatest attribute of heaven is Mercy;  
And 't is the crown of justice, and the glory,  
Where it may kill with right, to save with pity."

If the taking of Jerusalem were the only fact known about **Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and perhaps of any, age.**<sup>840</sup>

He also forced Acre, Ascalon, Arsuf, Jaffa and Caesarea to become tributaries. Godfrey was believed to have possessed immense physical strength. According to William of Tyre, Godfrey was tall of nature, strong beyond compare with solidly built limbs and stalwart chest, his features were pleasing, his beard and hair of medium blond.

It is said that while he was besieging the city of Acre, Godfrey was struck by an arrow which killed him. Others say he had died after eating a poisoned apple. Whatever the truth, he died in Caesarea in June 1100. He had no heirs because he did not marry throughout his life.

<sup>838</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. Godfrey of Bouillon.

<sup>839</sup> Karen Armstrong, Jerusalem, p. 277.

<sup>840</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, p. 233-234.

## Bohemond I of Antioch

He was also known as Bohemond of Taranto (1054-1111). He is counted among the most important nobles of the First Crusade. From Constantinople to Antioch, Bohemond was the real leader of the first crusade. He took a great part in the siege of Antioch beating off the Muslim attempts at relief from the east and connecting the besiegers on the west with the port of St. Simeon and the Genoese ships which lay there. Bohemond had played the main role to capture Antioch treacherously due to his connection with Firouz. He was mainly responsible for cannibalism and carrion consumption as stated under the title *Cannibalism at Antioch* in our chapter *Propagation and the Invasions*. The description included the sentence '*Bohemond slew some Turkish prisoners and roasted them in general presence.*' Bohemond also broke his solemn promise of safety assured to the wealthy citizens of Marrah as described under the topic '*Repeated Breach of Promise*' in our chapter '*Crusaders at Jerusalem and Constantinople*'. The readers may also find another report of breach of the joint promise of Tancred and *Gaston de Bearn* at Jerusalem and the avarice of Raymond the count of Toulouse under the same topic.

The Emperor's daughter Anna Comnena who met Bohemond at the age of 14 years was quite fascinated by him. According to her, Bohemond was marvel for the eye to behold. Bohemond was so tall in stature that he overtopped the tallest by nearly one cubit. A well built man perfectly proportioned indicating high spirit and dignity. The Christians, therefore, count him among great heroes of the crusades.

Bohemond, however, did not have good relations with the Byzantine Empire and also broke his sacred oath with them. Geoffrey Malaterra bluntly states that **Bohemond took the cross with the intention of plundering and conquering Greek lands.** The Wikipedia reports that:

His parents were related within the degree of kinship that made their marriage invalid, according to canon law. Robert Guiscard decided to marry Sikelgaita, the sister of Gisulf, the Lombard Prince of Salerno around 1058. He expelled Alberada and Bohemond became a bastard due to the annulment of his parents' marriage.<sup>841</sup>

Although Bohemond had bravely fought many battles during the crusades but he was more famous for his cruelty than his valor. Gibbon reports that:

**Bohemond slew some Turkish prisoners and roasted them publicly.** Cannibalism was also resorted to at the siege of Marra. One chronicler dryly says there is nothing surprising in the matter, and wonders that they sometimes ate dogs in preference to Saracens.<sup>842</sup>

The Wikipedia records that:

In 1104 Baldwin II of Edessa had attacked and besieged the city of Harran. For his further support Baldwin sought help from Bohemond I of Antioch and Tancred, Prince of Galilee. Bohemond and Tancred marched north from Antioch to Edessa to join with Baldwin and Joscelin of Courtenay, accompanied by Bernard of Valence the Patriarch of Antioch, Daimbert of Pisa the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Benedict, the Archbishop of Edessa.<sup>843</sup>

The main battle was fought 12 KM from Harran. It had been reported that:

During the battle itself, Baldwin's troops were completely routed, with Baldwin and Joscelin captured by the Turks. The Antiochene troops along with Bohemond were able to escape to Edessa. However, Jikirmish had only taken a small amount of booty, so he purloined Baldwin from Sokman's camp. Although a ransom was paid, Joscelin and Baldwin were not released until sometime before 1108, and 1108 respectively.<sup>844</sup>

Bohemond was destined to found a great principality in Antioch which would dwarf Jerusalem; he had a fine territory, good strategic position and a strong army. In spite of this, he was a great failure in the end both at the hands of the Byzantine Empire and the Muslims.

<sup>841</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Bohemond I of Antioch.

<sup>842</sup> Foot & Wheeler, p. 334-335.

<sup>843</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.'Battle of Harran'.

<sup>844</sup> ibid.

## Peter the Hermit

Peter the Hermit (1050-1115) was a priest of Amiens and a key figure during the first crusade. It is said that he had attempted to go to Jerusalem before 1096 but was prevented by the Seljuk Turks from reaching his goal and was reportedly mistreated. However, doubts remain that he ever made such a journey.<sup>845</sup>

Peter had been the prominent preacher of the crusades in France. It is said that thousands of peasants eagerly took the cross at his bidding. He started with 40 thousand men and women from Cologne in April 1096. In Germany in spring 1096 Peter miserably failed to control his men, who went on rampages killing Jews. To know more about his reckless behavior, the readers may refer to '*Expedition Led by Peter the Hermit*' in our chapter on '*Propagation and the Invasions*'.

Except from a fiery speaker and destroyer of peace and property, nothing special has been reported about him. Anyhow, he was present in the siege of Antioch during which he had been the prime authority to allow cannibalism. He was the person to advise that:

A dainty dish is Paynim<sup>846</sup> flesh,  
with salt and roasting due.'  
'Now by my fay,' quoth King Tafur,  
'the Hermit sayeth true.'

For further details, please go through '*The Leaguer of Antioch*' in our chapter titled '*Propagation and the Invasions*'.

After conquest of Jerusalem Peter had returned to Neumoustier near Hey. He died there and was buried in the tomb within the Abbey.

## Fulk of Anjou

Fulk of Enjow (r. 1131-1143 AD) was the new king of Jerusalem at its zenith. He was great grandson of Fulk

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<sup>845</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Peter the Hermit.

<sup>846</sup> A non-Christian especially a Muslim.

the Black and son of Fulk IV. By the infamous Bertrada de Montfort who forsook her lawful husband for Phillip I who lived in open adultery with Bertrada the wife of Fulk Rachen of Anjou.<sup>847</sup>

## **Richard the Lionheart**

Richard *cour de Lion* had been described as the first king of England of knightly character.

According to Mills, “*Chivalry was the golden thread that ran through the middle ages, the corrective of vice, the personification of virtue.*”<sup>848</sup> The Christians applaud Richard the Lionheart as an iconic figure both in England and France. Many praise him for his chivalry and heroism during the crusades. All such admiration, however, seems to be based merely on valor, ferociousness and ruthless killing of the Muslims as well as the Jews. Cruelty alone, therefore, cannot bestow nobility on a knight or greatness on any king in the world.

Richard was crowned as a king in the Westminster abbey on 3 September 1189. About his courtesy and cruelty with the Jews, we learn that:

Richard barred all Jews and women from the investiture, but some Jewish leaders arrived to present gifts for the new king. According to Ralph of Diceto, Richard's courtiers stripped and flogged the Jews, then flung them out of court.

When a rumour spread that Richard had ordered all Jews to be killed, the people of London attacked the Jewish population. Many Jewish homes were burned down, and several Jews were forcibly baptised. Some sought sanctuary in the Tower of London, and others managed to escape. Among those killed was Jacob of Orléans, a respected Jewish scholar. Roger of Howden, in his *Gesta Regis Ricardi*, claimed that the rioting was started by the jealous and bigoted citizens, and that Richard punished the perpetrators, allowing a forcibly converted Jew to return to his native religion. Baldwin of Forde, Archbishop of Canterbury, reacted by remarking, "If the King is not God's man, he had better be

<sup>847</sup> T. A. Archer & Charles L. Kingsford, *The Crusades*, p. 188 and 28.

<sup>848</sup> Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry*, p. 230.

the devil's".<sup>849</sup>

During the expedition Richard reached Sicily in 1190. Mills reports that:

The vessel which carried the dowager queen of Sicily and Berengaria had been refused entrance into port. Richard soon arrived off Limisso, and it is singular that so irascible a monarch should three times demand reparation.<sup>850</sup>

The people of Cyprus were unhappy with their ruler. They, therefore, cooperated with Richard to conquer the island. This is how Richard repaid the debt:

Isaac was taken; the king of England became lord of Cyprus; he taxed the people to the dreadful amount of the half of their movables and then accorded to them, the rights they had enjoyed under the dominion of the Byzantine emperors.<sup>851</sup>

After conquering Cyprus, however, he sold the island to Knight's Templar. When the people at Messina revolted against the outsiders and demanded that the foreigners must leave, Richard attacked Messina and captured it.

After looting and burning the city, Richard established his base there, but this created tension between Richard and Phillip Augustus.<sup>852</sup>

The western historians admire Richard I of England for his unmatched valor and fortitude in the war. They, therefore, eulogize him as 'Richard the Lionheart'. No doubt he matched a lion in his ferociousness yet no comparison could be drawn between him and Saladin the man. The difference is apparent from the following:

The most flagrant crime of this Crusade was perpetrated by Richard at Acre. During the siege, and after the capture of this city, the Crusaders wallowed in vice. Richard's courage, however, gave them the victory. Saladin agreed to give up a piece of the holy cross, and pay two hundred thousand pieces of gold for the prisoners. Incensed by a trifling delay, the savage Richard on the Friday after the Assumption marched

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<sup>849</sup> *A Look on 1200-1229 C.E.*, by AnVi OpenSource Book Trust, edited by P.Pillai. p. 37.

<sup>850</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. II, p. 40.

<sup>851</sup> *ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>852</sup> *Wikipedia*, s.v.Richard the Lionheart, quoted from Flori, 1999 (Frenche), p. 117.

two thousand five hundred Saracens outside the walls, and murdered them before the Sultan's eyes. "It was done," says an ancient writer, "with the assent of all." No danger from the prisoners was alleged as an excuse; the act was one of simple ferocity. After the butchery, "With a superstition equally cruel and fierce, the Christians searched the carcasses of the murdered Turks for golden byzants, and converted the gall which was found in their dead bodies into medicines." Saladin might have made reprisals, but he disdained to emulate the barbarity of Richard, and sent back his prisoners unharmed.<sup>853</sup>

Historians also criticize his marriage, a betrothal and other promiscuous relationships. Some historians also accuse him of arranging the murder of his cousin *Conrad of Montferrat* through the *Hashshashin* (assassins). Just eight days after the death Conrad, Richard's nephew Henry II of Champagne was married to Isabella the widow of Conrad in spite of the fact that she was carrying Conrad's child.

Due to some conspiracies against him in England, Richard had to start his return journey without attaining his goal. The shipwreck during the journey left him with no choice except to adopt a dangerous land rout to England through central Europe where Henry the lion captured the Lionheart near Vienna. Leopold V Duke of Austria accused Richard for the murder of his cousin Conrad. Since the detention of a crusader was contrary to the public law, therefore, he was released in 1194 AD primarily due to intervention of pope Celestine III. After his release, he re-conquered Normandy and built a castle therein. This was done by clear cut violation of the treaty of Louviers (December 1195) between Richard and Phillip II according to which neither of the kings could fortify the site. The construction had begun while the interdict of the pope was hanging over Normandy. About the conquest of Normandy, Roger of Howden detailed that "*The unburied bodies of the dead lying at the streets and squares of the city of Normandy*". It has been further reported that in March 1199 AD, Richard was in the Limousin suppressing a revolt by Viscount Aimer V of Limoges. Although it was lent, he devastated the Viscount's land with fire and sword. Besides this,

<sup>853</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 362-363.

there are accusations of homosexuality against Richard. Roger of Howden tells of a hermit who warned him that "Be thou mindful of the destruction of Sodom and abstain for what is unlawful; for, if thou dost not, God's vengeance shall overtake thee."<sup>854</sup>"

It is said that Richard took back his wife whom for a long time he had not known and putting away all illicit intercourse he remained constant to his wife and the two become one flesh.<sup>855</sup> This material is complicated by accounts of Richard having at least one illegitimate child (Phillip of Cognac) and the allegation that Richard had sexual relations with local women during his campaigns. Flori cites contemporaneous accounts of Richard taking women by force and concludes that Richard probably had sexual relations with both men and women at different stages. Flori and Gillanham nevertheless agree that contemporaneous accounts do not support the suggestion that Richard had a sexual relationship with King Phillip II as suggested by some modern authors.

It was perhaps due to the accounts of Richard as referred to above that in spite of acknowledging the military exploits of Richard, Steven Runciman's final verdict contained the following:

He was a bad son, a bad husband, and a bad king, but a gallant and splendid soldier.<sup>856</sup>

Another writer's remarks about Richard I depict the general motives of the Christian hero in the following. The writer records about Richard that:

**He was a bad king:** his great exploits, his military skill, his splendour and extravagance, his poetical tastes, his adventurous spirit, do not serve to cloak his entire want of sympathy, or even consideration, for his people. He was no Englishman, but it does not follow that he gave to Normandy, Anjou, or Aquitaine the love or care that he denied to his

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<sup>854</sup> Michael Evans, *The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* (London: Hamledon Continuum, 2007), p. 161.

<sup>855</sup> A Look on 1200-1229 C.E., by AnVi OpenSource Book Trust, edited by P.Pillai. p. 44.

<sup>856</sup> Steven Runciman, *History of the Crusades*" Vol. III, p. 75.

kingdom. His ambition was that of a mere warrior: he would fight for anything whatever, but he would sell everything that was worth fighting for. The glory that he sought was that of victory rather than conquest.<sup>857</sup>

Summing up the characteristics of Richard the Lionheart we conclude that he might have been ferocious like a lion and a victorious fighter in the crusades and other battles in Europe yet he had nothing in him of humanity or obedience to the law of the Lord as preached by Jesus Christ. The same had been the moral behavior of most of the Christian leaders crusading in the name of religion. Mahatma Gandhi of India had, however, observed that:

As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious.  
There is no such thing as religion overruling morality.

The entire review of the crusades, however, defies any impact of the religious teachings of Jesus Christ among the crusaders. As such, none of the Christian heroes could be a match with Salah-al-Din, Noor-al-Din, Imad-al-Din Zengi or any great Sultan of Ottoman Empire and god-conscious followers of the teachings and characters of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) while fighting for the glory of God and eradication of evil in the world.

## **EI-Cid**

Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar (1043-1099) better known as EI-Cid was an outstanding warrior of the Christians in Spain. He served Ferdinand's son Sancho II of Leon and Castile. While yet a youth he gave an earnest of his martial and ferocious disposition and was soon called to be the champion of his king. According to Christian reports, EI-Cid had an outstanding record of success in his single combats against the Moorish fighters in which he had always been victorious. He seemed to be a great

<sup>857</sup> William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England, in Its Origin and Development* (New York: Cambridge Uni Press, 2011), p. 512.

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fighter but some stories about him are nothing more than legends composed for folk amusement.

El-Cid became renowned for military prowess in many of his campaigns against the Muslims in Spain. Unluckily he was twice expelled from Castile by the Kings and for some time he also served under the Moorish Muslims in Spain and helped them in winning some of the battles. It was during this period that he used to be addressed by his Moorish companions as Al-Sayyid (the leader). Subsequently, the title was shortened to El-Cid which survives till today. The Christian king had to recall him twice from the exile to fight on his side to win certain victories against the moors. Christians admire him for his frankness, honor and magnanimity. His magnanimity with the vanquished had mostly been for the Christians. Charles Mills reports that:

On every occasion El-Cid showed a generous indifference to his own share of the spoil; and whatever country he left, both men and women wept, and the prayers of the people went before him, so high was his reputation for acts of individual clemency.<sup>858</sup>

Attaching presumption of truth to the observation quoted above we find El-Cid deserving similar love from his subjects as reported about the famous Muslim general Muhammad bin Qasim (695-715 AD) the conqueror of Sindh. He had been so magnanimous and judicious with the vanquished that when he was called back to Damascus, they wept bitterly for his departure. Many Hindus even built idols of Muhammad bin Qasim and worshiped him.

Charles Mills reports about the treachery of El-Cid with two Jews who being confident of his honor were handed over two chests with sand to obtain the sum of six hundred marks.<sup>859</sup> El-Cid also repeatedly violated his pledges with the Moors of Valencia. He was fond of pomp and show. Ultimately it was during the siege of Valencia by the Moors in 1099 that El-Cid died as a

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<sup>858</sup> Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry*, p. 267-268.

<sup>859</sup> ibid, p. 263-64.

result of famine and deprivation caused by the siege. Describing many of his features, Charles Mills observes that:

Here was the calculating man of vengeance, not the gay, the wild cavalier throwing down his gauntlet, and displaying his whole soul in one burst of generous passion. There is a sternness about the Cid which repels our gaze. His mind was not enriched by Arabic learning, and grateful to his teachers; nor was it softened by recollections of Arabian loves: **and when I see him pitying his sword that it had not received the food it deserved, I can scarcely allow him a station among the heroes of chivalry, those brilliant spirits; for I recognize nothing but the barbarism of the Goth, infuriated by the vengeful spirit of the Moor.**<sup>860</sup>

One of those Moors gave him the following praise, with which I shall conclude my remarks on his character: "The Cid, Ruy Diaz," said he, was the man in the world who had the bravest heart, and he was the best knight at arms, and the man who best maintained his law; and in the word which he hath promised he never fails; and he is the man in the world who is the best friend to his friend, and to his enemy he is the mortalest foe among all Christians; and to the vanquished he is full of mercy and compassion; and full thoughtful and wise in whatever thing he doeth; and his countenance is such that no man seeth him for the first time without conceiving great fear."<sup>861</sup>

Keeping in view the mixed reports about El-Cid we find certain traits of a chivalrous knight in him. He, however, had been playing as a turn coat in accordance with the worldly attractions before him. No source tells us that he was a Muslim yet we are also doubtful about his Christianity. Instead of fighting for any moral convictions, worldly gains, fame and ferociousness were the only goals pursued by him. El-Cid, therefore, miserably lacked the qualities of a hero.

## **John Hunyady**

Sultan Murad II had been extremely successful to consolidate his position in Anatolia and Rumelia. He had made such great achievements against the western Christendom that Constantinople as well as states

<sup>860</sup> ibid, p. 285-286.

<sup>861</sup> ibid, p. 286-287.

adjoining the Ottoman sultanate were running the risk of subjugation at his hands. It was at this critical juncture of European history that John Hunyadi (1406-1456 AD) came forward to rescue the Christians. Stanley Lane Poole introduces Hunyadi in the following words:

Hunyady was the name the Christians conjured with. When King Sigismund of Hungary was flying from one of his unsuccessful engagements with the Ottoman armies, he met and loved the beautiful Elizabeth Morsiney, at the village of Hunyade, and John Hunyady was believed to be the fruit of this consolatory affection. "Whataeover his parents were," says Knolles, "he himself was a politic, valiant fortunate, and famous captain, his victories so great as the like was never before by any Christian prince obtained against the Turks; so that his name became unto them so dreadful that they used the name to fear their crying children withal."<sup>862</sup>

John Hunyady was perhaps the greatest celebrity of the Christian crusaders and a ferocious fighter against the Muslims after Richard the Lionheart. Although he won two or three battles against the Ottomans during 1441/1442 yet he attained his reputation as a great general while successfully defending Belgrade in 1456 AD against the troops led personally by the Sultan. The crusaders, therefore, remembered him with the title *Athleta Christi* (Christ's Champion) and they regarded him as a common hero of the Christians in the Eastern Europe. Pope Callixtus III ordered the bells of every European church to be rung everyday at noon, as a call for believers to pray for the Christian defenders of the city of Belgrade. The said practice continues till today.

We, too, acknowledge him as a military genius and a brave fighter deserving our appreciation to defend the Christians in Europe. In spite of this, we cannot give him any ascendancy over Sultan Murad II who defeated him repeatedly and especially when he was leading the combined armies of almost entire Europe. **Hunyady depicted himself as one of the cruelest persons having no humaneness in him.** Hence instead of

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<sup>862</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, (Lahore: Publishers United Ltd., Anarkali), p. 59-60.

acknowledging him as a chivalrous knight or a hero we count him among the among the most despised enemies of humankind such as Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Helagu Khan and Amir Temur etc. Here is a report about John Hunyady's battle against Murad's General Mezid during the siege of Hermann Stadt in Transylvania. His bestiality is evident from the following:

Hunyady came to the rescue of the beleaguered city with a small force in 1442, and aided by a sally of the garrison totally routed the Turkish army, killed 20,000 of the enemy, and having taken their general prisoner had him publicly hacked to pieces. Hunyady was as cruel and bloodthirsty- as even the traditional Bashibozuk. It was his delight to have his banquets accompanied by the sight of the slaughtering of his enemies, just as other princes prefer to eat their dinner to the sound of music; but Hunyady's music was the shriek of a dying prisoner. Soon after his success at Hermannstadt, he heavily defeated the Turks as Vasag, or Vaskapu, and in 1443 commanded a magnificent army, composed of the flower of Hungary, Serbia, and Wallachia, together with a band of crusaders from Italy whom the Pope had excited to the Holy war. King Vladislaus of Hungary was present, and Cardinal Julian brought the weight of papal authority. They met the Ottoman troops on the banks of the Morava, near Nissa, and routed them completely. The Turks fled over the Balkan, and Hunyady pursued them.<sup>863</sup>

## **Violation of the Treaty**

Sultan Murad though a great fighter was fed up of bloodshed. He, therefore, abdicated in 1446 AD to devote himself entirely to the worship and prayer of the Lord. The Christians took it as an opportunity to forsake their treaties with the Turks and to take undue advantage against the teenaged opponent i.e. Sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror) who then was just 13 years old. Stanley Lane Poole records that:

No sooner were the Christians aware of the abdication of the famous Sultan, whose generalship, despite the reverses his Pashas had received at the hands of Hunyady, was still an article of faith with his foes, than they resolved to forsake their treaty. The Pope and the Greek Emperor used their spiritual influence to induce Hunyady to break his oath and Cardinal Julian employed the celebrated and infamous

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<sup>863</sup> ibid, p. 61.

argument which Cardinal Ximenes with equal success urged upon the conscience of Isabella of Castile – that oaths are not to be kept with infidels. Hunyady was with difficulty persuaded, but the promise of the kingship of Bulgaria was too much for his honour, and he agreed to perjure himself. The treaty had hardly been sworn a month when this perfidy was afoot; but the conspirators waited till the Turks had loyally carried out their parts of the bond and had evacuated forts of Serbia, before they began to disclose their plans.

Nothing more derogatory to the chivalry of Europe and the fame of the great general could be imagined than the manner in which this treachery was carried out. As soon as they had obtained the full advantages of the treaty they were about to disown, by the retirement of the Ottoman garrisons, Hunyady, with the King of Hungary, and Cardinal Julian, marched upon the unsuspecting Turks, and with only 20,000 men began to invade the Ottoman dominions, they took many strong places,<sup>864</sup> and massacred the garrisons or threw them over precipices.

Consequently, Murad had no option except to resume power once again to defend the Turkish lands. Eventually, the combined Christian armies under Hunyady as the commander in chief pressed hard on the Turks in 1444. Stanley Lane Poole reports that:

Murad's presence of mind had failed him only for a moment, and he now encouraged his Janissaries to stand firm against the Christian charge. King Vladislaus, on the other side, fought gallantly in the thickest of the strife; but his horse was killed under him, and he was then surrounded and overpowered. He wished to yield himself a prisoner, but the Ottomans, indignant at the breach of the treaty, had sworn to give no quarter. An old Janissary cut off the king's head, and placed it, helmeted in silver, on a pike – a fearful companion to the lance on which the violated treaty was still reared on high.

"The Hungarian nobles were appalled at the sight, and their centre fled in utter dismay from the field. Hunyady, on returning with his victorious right wing, vainly charged the Janissaries, and strove at least to rescue from them ghastly trophy of their victory. At last he fled in despair with the wreck of the troops that he had personally commanded and with the Wallachians who collected round him. The Hungarian rearguard, abandoned by their commanders, was attacked by the Turks the next morning, and massacred almost to a man.

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<sup>864</sup> ibid, p. 62-63.

Besides the Hungarian king, Cardinal Julian, the author of the breach of the treaty and the cause of this calamitous campaign, perished at Varna beneath the Turkish scimitar, together with Stephen Bahory, and the bishops of Eilau and Grosswardein.<sup>865</sup>

The result of this decisive victory was the complete subjugation of Serbia and Bosnia, which were the more willing to re-enter the Moslem dominion as they had been threatened with persecution and a forcible conversion to the Latin faith in the event of the triumph of Hunyady. Murad again retired to Magnesia; but his son was still too young to manage the empire, and a revolt of the Janissaries recalled the father to his responsibilities. He did not retire a third time, but reigned for six years in undiminished glory, and once more defeated his old enemy Hunyady at a second long contested battle at Kosovo.<sup>866</sup>

At last he died in 1451. "Thus lieth great Amurath<sup>867</sup>," writes Knolles, compelled into a sort of enthusiasm as he contemplates the death of the mighty Sultan, "erst not inferior unto the greatest monarchs of that age. . . . Who had fought greater battles? Who had gained greater victories, or obtained more glorious triumph than had Amurath? Who by the spoils of so mighty kings and princes, and by the conquest of so many proud and warlike nations, again restored and embellished the Turks' kingdom, before by Tamerlane and the Tartars in a manner clean defaced? He it was that burst the heart of the proud Grecians, establisheing his empire at Adrianople, even in the centre of their bowels from whence have proceeded so many miseries and calamities, unto the greatest part of Christendom as no tongue is able to express. He it was that subdued unto the Turks so many great countries and provinces in Asia; that in plain field and set battled overthrew many puissant kings and princes, and brought them under his subjection, who, having slain Vladislaus, the King of Polognia and Hungary, and more than once chased out of the Hunyady that famous and redoubted warrior, had in his proud and ambitious heart promised unto himself the conquest of a great part of Christendom . . . Where is that victorious hand that swayed so many scepters? Where is the majesty of his power and strength that commanded over so many nations and kingdoms? He lieth now dead, a ghastly carcase, a clod of clay unregarded, his hands closed, his eyes shut, his feet stretched out, which erst

<sup>865</sup> *ibid*, p. 65.

<sup>866</sup> *ibid*, p. 65-66.

<sup>867</sup> Knolles was so impressed of the nobility and heroic deeds of Sultan Murad that he described him as 'Great Amurath' i.e. Murad the Great.

proudly traced the countries by him subdued and conquered."

But the clod of clay was not quite unregarded: it was buried with great solemnity at Brusa, where "he now lieth in a chapel without any proof, his grave nothing differing from the manner of the common Turks: which they say he commanded to be done in his last will, that the mercy and blessing of God might come unto him with the shining of the sun and moon and falling of the rain and dew upon his grave.<sup>868</sup>

Keeping in view the brave, glorious and righteous conduct of Sultan Murad II, we strongly disapprove the despicable remarks of Knoles that "*He lieth now dead, a ghastly carcase, a clod of clay unregarded, his hands closed, his eyes shut, his feet stretched out, which erst proudly traced the countries by him subdued and conquered.*"

The bias of the European Christian writers against the Ottomans is evident from the above. We don't think any Christian king or a knight had ever died in a better manner or with greater nobility of acts and deeds like that of Sultan Murad II.

He was a god-fearing man who never fought for his personal dignity or fame. Being a devout Muslim, he always fought for the glory of the name of God and continued to behave with the vanquished people in a magnanimous manner. This was so because he expected all his rewards from the Almighty than from the mortal men in the world. Instead of a proud tyrant, therefore, sultan Murad died as a humble and obedient servant of the Lord and had chosen to be buried like any ordinary man in the world. Billions of blessings of the Lord be on him for his godliness, uprightness and generosity covered with the utmost gallantry ever seen in the world. According to Salih Gulen:

In his letter of will that he (Murad) had written five years prior to his death, he announced his wish "to be buried in an open-top grave in Bursa next to his long-gone son Aladdin and that no other from his dynasty should be buried in the same yard.<sup>869</sup>

<sup>868</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 66-67.

<sup>869</sup> Salih Gulen, *The Ottoman Sultans*, p. 56.

In spite of his obvious prejudice against Sultan Murad, Stanley Lane Pool started the very next chapter of his book with the remarks that:

**Murad's long reign of thirty years was soiled by no breath of dishonour; his character was as noble as it was commanding.**<sup>870</sup>

We, therefore, need not say anything more to appreciate the life and conduct of Sultan Murad except that Hunyadi had nothing of chivalry, piety, mercy and magnanimity of Sultan Murad. Even as a military genius he was no match with the Sultan. His illustrious son Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror of Constantinople had attained maturity as a great general through about 9 years training and grooming by Sultan Murad.

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<sup>870</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 69.

## WAR CODES AND WAR ETHICS OF ISLAM

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) started his prophetic mission in 609 AD i.e. about 13 years before the Hijra. From the start of his mission, the nonbelievers at Mecca had been subjecting the followers of the Prophet (pbAh) to such coercion and unbearable atrocities that some Muslims had to migrate to Abyssinia twice. The first emigration took place in about 613/615 AD while the second during 615/616 AD. The Quraysh of Makkah had continued to inflict unbearable tortures and humiliation on the Muslims to the extent that ultimately; the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and the Muslims had to decide to emigrate from Mecca to seek refuge at Medina. Even after their Hijrah to Medina, the Quraysh of Makkah had been pressing hard on them from different sides. Ultimately, it was during the *Dhil-Hajj* of first *Hijrah* i.e. shortly before the Battle of Badr that the Almighty granted the permission to the Muslims to fight against the non-believers, the evildoers and the invaders on them. The Lord revealed to them that:

To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged;- and verily, Allah is most powerful for their aid;- (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right,- (for no cause) except that they say, "our Lord is Allah". Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid his (cause);- for verily Allah is full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (able to enforce His Will).<sup>871</sup>

Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have Turned you out; for tumult and oppression are

<sup>871</sup> Al-Qur'ān 22:39-40 Yusuf Ali.

worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. But if they cease, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them on until there is no more Tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease, Let there be no hostility except to those who practise oppression.<sup>872</sup>

Even at this time, God forbade the Muslims to fight during the forbidden months. God said:

But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practise regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>873</sup>

It is evident from the above that the Muslims had been granted permission only to fight in the cause of Allah, to defend themselves or to rescue believers against mischief and oppression of others. God said:

And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed)?- Men, women, and children, whose cry is: "Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from thee one who will protect; and raise for us from thee one who will help!"<sup>874</sup>

Muslims had no permission to arrange raids merely with a motive to plunder others, to capture their lands and properties or to enslave men and women of the enemy. With the exception of war, therefore, Islam closed all other doors of enslavement of the free people. It also abhors the permanence of slavery. Even the captives of war deserved to be freed as soon as possible.

No Muslim could behave treacherously nor could he humiliate the defeated people. Even in case of war, Muslims are not allowed to kill women, children, worshipers in churches, Rahibs (Monks) in synagogues, old people, infirm, and handicapped, the sick and those who took no part in war. It is disallowed to kill slaves,

<sup>872</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:190-193 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>873</sup> Al-Qur'ān 9:5 Yusuf Ali.

<sup>874</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:75 Yusuf Ali.

servants and attendants of the patients and sick. It is also not allowed to cheat, to burn anyone living or dead, to destroy fruit and land produce, to put houses and belongings of the vanquished on fire or to do anything pernicious and despicable. It is also not allowed to chop off trees and to poison the water supply.<sup>875</sup>

## **Traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh)**

Before discussing the individual characters of the Muslim heroes during all times from the advent of Islam to the present, we need to keep in mind that the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) had been the best pattern to be followed by all the believers. The Qur'ān had provided all essentials of faith including precepts of moral excellence for the Muslim community. By his personal example, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) implemented in the society as per the injunctions of the Qur'ān the nice and kind treatment with the vanquished people. All the commanders of the Muslim armies, therefore, had been mindful of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and his instructions to them.

Narrated Abu Burda: Allah's Apostle sent Abu Musa and Muadh bin Jabal to Yemen. He sent each of them to administer a province as Yemen consisted of two provinces. The Prophet said (to them), "Facilitate things for the people and do not make things difficult for them (Be kind and lenient (both of you) with the people, and do not be hard on them) and give the people good tidings and do not repulse them. So each of them went to carry on his job.<sup>876</sup>

Islam prohibited all atrocities against the conquered people, Sulayman bin Buraydah has narrated from his father that:

when the Messenger of Allah appointed anyone as leader of an army or detachment he would especially exhort him to fear Allah and to be good to the Muslims who were with him. He would say: Fight in the name of Allah and in the way of Allah. Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war, do not embezzle the spoils ; do not break your pledge; and do

<sup>875</sup> Maulana Saeed Ahmed, p. 91.

<sup>876</sup> *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 5, Book 59, Hadith Number 630:

not mutilate (the dead) bodies; do not kill the children. When you meet your enemies who are polytheists, invite them to three courses of action. If they respond to any one of these, you also accept it and withhold yourself from doing them any harm. Invite them to (accept) Islam; if they respond to you, accept it from them and desist from fighting against them. Then invite them to migrate from their lands to the land of *Muhajirs* and inform them that, if they do so, they shall have all the privileges and obligations of the *Muhajirs*. If they refuse to migrate, tell them that they will have the status of Bedouin Muslims and will be subjected to the Commands of Allah like other Muslims, but they will not get any share from the spoils of war or *Fai'* except when they actually fight with the Muslims (against the disbelievers). If they refuse to accept Islam, demand from them the *Jizya*. If they agree to pay, accept it from them and hold off your hands. If they refuse to pay the tax, seek Allah's help and fight them. When you lay siege to a fort and the besieged appeal to you for protection in the name of Allah and His Prophet, do not accord to them the guarantee of Allah and His Prophet, but accord to them your own guarantee and the guarantee of your companions for it is a lesser sin that the security given by you or your companions be disregarded than that the security granted in the name of Allah and His Prophet be violated. When you besiege a fort and the besieged want you to let them out in accordance with Allah's Command, do not let them come out in accordance with His Command, but do so at your (own) command, for you do not know whether or not you will be able to carry out Allah's behest with regard to them.<sup>877</sup>

Here is another *Hadith* of the Messenger of Allah (pbAh) for guidance of the believers:

Narrated Anas ibn Malik: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Go in Allah's name, trusting in Allah, and adhering to the religion of Allah's Apostle. Do not kill a decrepit old man, or a young infant, or a child, or a woman; do not be dishonest about booty, but collect your spoils, do right and act well, for Allah loves those who do well.<sup>878</sup>

It is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah that a woman was found killed in one of the battles fought by the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him). He disapproved of the killing of women and children.<sup>879</sup>

Although, there had been many traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) to treat with the vanquished yet, it may

<sup>877</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 2 : Book 19, Hadith Number 4294:

<sup>878</sup> *Sahih Abu Dawud*, Book 14, Hadith Number 2608:

<sup>879</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, Chapter 8 : Book 19, Hadith Number 4319

not be possible for us to cover all such instances here. We shall, therefore, be mentioning only four of the Holy Prophet's traditions i.e. during the Battle of Badr 2 AH, raid on B. al-Mustaliq in 6 AH, Conquest of Makkah and the Battle of Hunayn in 8 AH.

#### ▪ **The Battle of Badr:**

It has been narrated that 70 of the non-believers of Makkah were killed during the battle of Badr while 70 others were imprisoned by the Muslims. According to Ibn Hisham, **no one except Uqba bin Abi Mueet was killed after the end of the battle and he too was killed by Asim bin Thabit bin abi Aflah for some other misunderstanding than merely due to his participation in the battle of Badr.** According to numerous authentic and trustworthy sources such as a number of narrations in Sahih Bukhari, and Ibn Sa'd's biographical compendium, the Tabaqat Al-Kubra, Uqba was killed in the field of battle, during the Battle of Badr and was among those Quraysh leaders whose corpses were buried in a pit.<sup>880</sup>

After the defeat of the Quraysh of Makkah, at Badr, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) assigned the captives to various persons among the Muslims. One of them was *Abd alAziz ibn Umayr*, the flag bearer of the idolaters in the battle. He was handed over to Ansar:

Among the captives were Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, Uqayl b. Abu Talib and Nawfal b. Abdul Muttalib, his cousins, Abu'l-As Ibn ar-Rabi, the husband of the Prophet's daughter Zaynab, Abu Aziz Ibn Umayr, the brother of Musab bin Umayr and the standard-bearer of the polytheistic army.

Hazrat Umar was appointed to tie the captives so that they will not flee. Abbas was tied very tightly because he was the most important one among them. Therefore, he started to moan in pain at night. The Prophet could not sleep at night when he heard Abbas moan. They asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! Why are you not sleeping?" He said, "Due to the moaning of Abbas..." Some of the Companions who did not want the Messenger of Allah to be disturbed untied Abbas.

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<sup>880</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. *Uqba ibn Abu Muayt*.

When the Prophet noticed that the moaning stopped, he asked, "Why do I not hear the moaning of Abbas?" They said, "We untied him." Thereupon, the Prophet said, "Untie the other captives, too!" Then, he fell asleep.<sup>881</sup>

### ▪ ***Raid on Bani al-Mustaliq***

Ibn Ishaq has narrated that:

Asim b. 'Umar b. Qatada and 'Abdullah b. Abu Bakr and Muhammad b. Yahya b. Habban each told me a part of the following story: The apostle received news that B. al-Mustaliq were gathering together against him, their leader being al-Harith b. Abu Dirar, the father of Juwayriya d. al-Harith (afterwards) wife of the apostle. When the apostle heard about them he went out and met them at a watering place of theirs called al-Muraysi' in the direction of Qudayd towards the shore. There was a fight and God put the B. al-Mustaliq to flight and killed some of them and gave the apostle their wives, children, and property as booty.<sup>882</sup>

Muhammad b. Ja'far b. al-Zubayr from 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr from 'A'isha said: when the apostle distributed the captives of B. al-Mustaliq, Juwayriya fell to the lot of Thabit b. Qays b. al-Shammas, or to a cousin of his, and she gave him a deed for her redemption. She was a most beautiful woman. She captivated every man who saw her. She came to the apostle to ask his help in the matter. As soon as I saw her at the door of my room I took a dislike to her, for I knew that he would see as I saw her. She went in and told him who she was - d. of-Harith b. Abu Dirar, the chief of his people. You can see the state to which I have been brought. I have fallen to the lot of Thabit or his cousin and have given him a deed for my ransom and have come to ask your help in the matter. He said, Would you like something better than that? I will discharge your debt and marry you, and she accepted him.

The news that the apostle had married Juwayriya was blazed abroad and now that B. Mustaliq were the prophet's relations by marriage the men released those they held.

**When he married her a hundred families were released. I do not know a woman who was a greater blessing to her people than she.**<sup>883</sup>

One of the purposes of our narration of B. al-Mustaliq was to show that Muslims did not humiliate the defeated people and especially women captured from the battle

<sup>881</sup> Seerat ibn Sa'ad.

<sup>882</sup> Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 490.

<sup>883</sup> ibid, p. 493.

field. Those who could not be ransomed were normally married by the Muslims than to keep them in the inferior status of a captive of war. Besides Juwairyah, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) had also married Safiyyah b. Huyay keeping in view her nobility as daughter of the chief of her tribe. He restored not only the social status of Juwairyah and Safiyyah but also made eternally venerable as mothers of the believers. Such excellent and honorable treatment with the defeated people became everlasting tradition of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) not to humiliate your enemies and to treat them in a kind manner unless some individual had already committed a crime deserving punishment as per Islamic law. Such gestures of good will from the Holy Prophet (pbAh) became essential part of the war ethics besides serving the cause of Islam.

#### ▪ **The Conquest of Makkah:**

The Muslim armies arrived at Mecca in 8 AH. The Holy Prophet (pbAh) and his companions fully remembered the atrocities of the Makkans with the helpless and poor Muslims in the city. They also had not forgotten the battle of Badr and the repeated invasions of Medina by the infidels of Makkah from the beginning of the first date of Hijrah up to Ramadhan of 8<sup>th</sup> Hijra. Each immigrant was fully aware of the intentions and criminal activities of the Makkan people to eliminate Islam and the Muslims from the face of earth. Eventually, the Muslims arranged an expedition towards Makkah with such impressive force that the citizens lost all the hopes of a successful resistance. Negotiations started by the infidels received a generous response from the messenger of Allah. Abu Sufyan who had been leading the armies of Makkah since 3 AH was given the honor to pronounce peace and to grant concessions to the Makkans on the authority of the Holy Prophet (pbAh):

When he (Abu Sufyan) came to them he cried at the top of his voice, People of Mecca, this Muhammad has come to you with a force you cannot resist. Anyone who enters the compound of Abū-Sufyān will be safe. Hind bint-`Utba got up, grabbed his

mustache and said, Kill this fat, greasy man. What a despicable protector of the people' But he said, Woe to you' Do not be deceived by this woman, because you cannot resist **the force coming against you. Anyone who enters the compound of Abū-Sufyān will be safe.** They answered, May God fight you. Your house is not big enough for us. He said, And anyone who locks the door of his house will be safe, and so will anyone who enters the mosque. Then the people split up, some going to their houses and some to the mosque.<sup>884</sup>

The Meccans who had taken refuge in the Mosque had since been joined by many of those who had at first taken refuge in their homes and they were sitting in groups, here and there, not far from the Ka'bah. The Prophet now addressed them, saying: "What say ye, and what think ye?" They answered: "We say well, and we think well: a noble and generous brother, son of a noble and generous brother. It is thine to command." He then spoke to them in the words of forgiveness which, according to the Revelation, Joseph spoke to his brothers when they came to him in Egypt: "Verily I say as my brother Joseph said: **This day there shall be no upbraiding of you nor reproach. God forgiveth you, and He is the most Merciful of the merciful.**"<sup>885</sup>

According to Ibn Ishaq:

The apostle had instructed his commanders when they entered Mecca only to fight those who resisted them, except a small number who were to be killed even if they were found beneath the curtains of the Ka'ba. Amog them was 'Abdullah b. Sa'd, brother of the b. 'Amir b. Lu'ayy. The reason he ordered him to be killed was that he had been a Muslim and used to write down revelation; then he apostatized and returned to Quraysh and fled to 'Uthman b. 'Affan whose foster-brother he was.<sup>886</sup>

#### ▪ ***Execution of Four Transgressors***

From the amnesty extended to the Citizens of Mecca, Mohammad excluded ten or twelve persons. Of these, however, only four were actually put to death. Al-Huweirth and Habbar were proscribed for their ruffianly attack on his daughter Zeinab, when she escaped from Mecca. The former was put to death by 'Ali. The latter concealed himself; and some months later, appearing at Medina, a repentant convert,

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<sup>884</sup> Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 548.

<sup>885</sup> Martin Lings, *Muhammad*, (New York, Inner Traditions International, 1983), p. 300-301.

<sup>886</sup> Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 550.

was forgiven. The next two were renegade Muslims who, having shed blood at Medina, had fled to Mecca and abjured Islam. They were both slain, one as he clung to the curtain of the Ka'ba; and also a singing girl belonging to them, who had been in the habit of annoying the Prophet with her satires.<sup>887</sup>

The proscriptions were thus comparatively few; and capital sentence, where actually carried into effect, was (with perhaps the exception of the singing girl) justified probably by other crimes than mere political antagonism. The magnanimity with which Mohammad treated a people who had so long hated and rejected him is worthy of all admiration. It was indeed for his own interest to forgive the past, and cast into oblivion its slights and injuries. But this did not the less require a large and generous heart. And Mohammad had his reward, for the whole population of his native city at once gave in their adhesion, and espoused his cause with alacrity and apparent devotion. Whatever the strength or weakness of religious conviction, there were no 'disaffected' inhabitants at Mecca nor any relapse even in the rebellion that followed the Prophet's death. Within a few weeks we find two thousand of the citizens fighting faithfully by his side.<sup>888</sup>

### ▪ ***The Prophet's General Amnesty***

Describing the general amnesty granted by the Holy Prophet (pbAh), Muhammad Husayn Haykal writes that:

Oh, the beauty of pardon and forgiveness on the part of the mighty and powerful! How great is the soul of Muhammad which rose above hatred and above revenge, which denied every human feeling and ascended to heights of nobility man had never reached before! There were the Quraysh among whom were people whom Muhammad well knew had plotted to kill him, had persecuted him, and inflicted upon him and his companions all kinds of injury and harm, who fought him at Badr and at Uhud, who blockaded him in the Campaign of al Khandaq, who incited the Arab tribes to rise against him. There, the whole of Quraysh stood totally under Muhammad's hand, indeed under his feet, totally subject to his command. Indeed, their very lives depended upon the first word emerging from his lips. All these thousands of men, of Muslims in battle array, stood on the ready waiting for that one word to wipe out the whole of Makkah and its people

<sup>887</sup> Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mohammad*, (Edinburgh) p. 410.

<sup>888</sup> ibid, p. 411-412.

within minutes. Muhammad, however, was no less than Muhammad. He was no less than the Prophet of God. No alienation, antagonism, or hostility could find any permanent abode in his heart. His heart was absolutely free of injustice, of malice, of tyranny or false pride. In the most decisive moment, God gave him power over his enemy. But Muhammad chose to forgive, thereby giving to all mankind and all the generations the most perfect example of goodness, of truthfulness, nobility and magnanimity.<sup>889</sup>

Stanley Lane Poole also pays tribute to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) in the following words:

The day of Mohammad's greatest triumph over his enemies was also the day of his grandest victory over himself. He freely forgave the Koraysh all the years of sorrow and cruel scorn in which they had afflicted him and gave an amnesty to the whole population of Makkah. Four criminals whom justice condemned made up Mohammad's proscription list, when he entered as a conqueror to the city of his bitterest enemies. The army followed his example, and entered quietly and peacefully; no house was robbed, no women insulted. One thing alone suffered destruction. (...) through all the annals of conquest there is no triumphant entry comparable to this one.<sup>890</sup>

Arthur Gilman reports that:

It is greatly to his praise that on this occasion, when his resentment for ill-usage in the past might naturally have incited him to revenge, he restrained his army from all shedding of blood, and showed every sign of humility and thanksgiving to Allah for his goodness. Khalid, it is true, did meet force with force at one point, but he was rebuked by Mohammed.<sup>891</sup>

#### **▪ *Amnesty During the Conquest of Hunayn:***

The Holy Prophet had defeated Bani Hawazin, Bani Sulaim and Bani Saad etc. during the battle of Hunain. All the families and flocks joining the battle had been captured by the Muslims and were rounded up in a vast concentration at Jiranah. It happened so that:

<sup>889</sup> Haykal, *Life of Muhammad*, (Lorong: Islamic Book Trust, 1996), p. 408.

<sup>890</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Speeches & Table-Talk of the Prophet Mohammad*, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1882), p. xlvi-xlvii.

<sup>891</sup> Arthur Gilman, *The Saracens*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887), p. 184.

Some of Beni Saad approached him (the Holy Prophet (pbAh)), saying, "O Apostle of God, the women who suckled you and who looked after you as an infant are in this concentration camp. Have pity on the poor people who have suffered this catastrophe." The Messenger of God replied, "Which are dearest to you? Your children and your wives, or your flocks and herds?" "Give us back our wives and our children," they answered.

The Apostle replied that, as far as he himself or his immediate relatives were concerned, the women and children would be released. He then told them to wait until he had prayed the noon prayer with the men. All the Muslims would then be present. At that moment, he explained to them, they should stand up and call out, 'We ask the Apostle's intercession with the Muslims, and the Muslims' intercession with the Apostle, to release our wives and our children."

The Hawazin delegation carefully executed the Apostle's instructions. The Emigrants and the Helpers immediately said that their share of the spoil was at the Prophet's disposal. The tribesmen, however, many of whom had not seriously adopted Islam, were less enthusiastic. The Fuzara and Beni Temeem said no. The chief of Beni Sulaim likewise refused to abandon his share, but the rank and file of the tribe shouted, "Not so! What is ours belongs to the Apostle.

The Apostle intervened at this stage, saying, "Whoever insists on his right to a share of the prisoners should release them now and I will compensate him with six camels to every man from the next booty we take." As a result of this promise, all agreed to release the women and children.

The incident is of interest as showing the "democratic" political methods used by the Apostle. He told the delegation to appeal to the general assembly of Muslims, using his own influence on the side of humanity and moderation. But, although he was venerated as a superman by his devoted followers, he did not issue an order.<sup>892</sup>

Qazi Muhammad Sulaiman Salman Mansurpuri reports that in Autas, the Muslims had captured 24000 camels, 40000 sheep, 4000 Oqia silver and six thousand women and children. They were yet staying at the battle field when six leaders of Bani Hawazin came to the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and prayed for his mercy. **These people also included those who had pelted stones on the**

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<sup>892</sup> John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), p. 326.

**Holy Prophet (pbAh) which had cost him unconsciousness. In spite of this, after hearing their plea, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) not only released all the prisoners of war but also gifted six camels to each prisoner from his own pocket. Besides this, the Holy Prophet (pbAh) also arranged new clothes for each person being released by him.**<sup>893</sup> Both Alp Arslan and Saladin Ayyubi were, therefore, following the generous and merciful tradition of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) when dealing with Emperor Romanos of Constantinople and the vanquished Christians at Jerusalem in about 1187 AD. Credit for all moral excellence shown by Alp Arslan, Salah al-Din Ayyubi and thousands of anonymous heroes of Islam goes to the guidance from the Almighty and the traditions set by the holy Prophet of Islam (pbAh).

The teachings of Islam and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) quoted above are widely different from the teachings of Old Testament extant today. We, however, cannot believe that the merciful and compassionate Lord God of the universe might have allowed the Israelites to be tyrants and brutes. Such instructions have perhaps been inserted into the Bible by the Israelites themselves to justify their plunder and cruelties perpetrated against other nations. Islam on the other hand, enjoined on the Muslims to ascribe no partners with Him and also to treat all human beings in a kind manner. God said:

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good-to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious;

As regards the Christians, Jesus neither waged a war nor did he teach codes of war to his followers. Christians, therefore, knew no ethics of war. In the absence of divine guidance, the kings as well as the clergy felt themselves free to interpret any part of the Old or the New Testament to serve the needs of the time. Might is

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<sup>893</sup> *Rehmatul lil Alameen* by Qazi Muhammad Sulaiman Salman Puri.

<sup>894</sup> Al-Qur'ān 4:36 Yusuf Ali.

right and everything is fair in love and war had been the guiding principles with them. Lack of any moral restraints had, therefore, been the main cause of their utter moral depravity during the wars especially the crusades. The cruel practices in wars of the Israelites as well as the Christians were not based on divine commandments. Both the Rabbis of the Israelites and the church fathers had attained the final authority to interpret the scriptures as they pleased. Treating their enemies as beasts and criminals, they imposed no limits on moral debasement of their forces. This was the reason that the belligerent Christians during the first and the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars enjoyed free hand to commit any crimes they could.

## **Veneration for God, His City and Commandments**

Since the ancient times, Jerusalem had been venerated as the sanctuary of the Almighty. A large number of the Prophets of Israel had been worshiping the Lord there. After the construction of temple by King Solomon at the Temple Mount, the city had become the centre of worship for the followers of the Law of Moses. The people and the Prophets of Israel after Solomon had, therefore, been visiting the sanctuary at least once a year for prayer and sacrifice at the temple. According to Muslim traditions, Prophet Muhammad (pbAh), too, had worshiped at the temple mount before he ascended to heaven during the Mirage. The dome of rock at the temple mount built by Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik bin Marwan stands over the rock from where the Holy Prophet (pbAh) had started his ascendance to the heavens. It was due to such veneration for Jerusalem that during first 18 months after prophet's emigration from Makkah to Medina, the Muslims used to take the temple mount as a sanctuary and they used to face towards it during their daily prayers.

Subsequently after a commandment from the Almighty they again started facing towards the first house of

God<sup>895</sup> i.e. Ka'bah at Makkah.<sup>896</sup> Jerusalem as such, was the 2<sup>nd</sup> ancient house of the Lord venerated by the Muslims. They, therefore, always took care not to do anything sacrilegious against the city or the house of God there.

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, the Muslims had conquered some parts of Syria. In May 636 AD Emperor Heraclius arranged a major expedition against the Muslims but had to face a decisive defeat at the battle of Yirmuk. The next year Muslims besieged Jerusalem and instead of relentless assaults on the city, they decided to press on with the siege until the Byzantine ran short of supplies and a bloodless surrender could be attained. Due to their desire to obtain bloodless surrender from the Christians in the city, the Muslim armies continued to negotiate with Sophronius (the patriarch of Jerusalem) for about four months. Eventually, the patriarch agreed to surrender the city peacefully provided Omer the Caliph of Islam came himself to sign the treaty. Omar the great the second among the rightly guided successors of the Holy Prophet (pbAh), entered Aelia (Jerusalem) in 637 AD in a peaceful manner. The city was officially surrendered to the Muslims after signing a pact of civil and religious liberties to the Christians in exchange for Jizya. It was for the first time after almost 500 years of oppressive Roman rule that Jews were once again allowed to worship and subsequently to live inside Jerusalem.

According to the historian, al-Tabari (838-923), the contents of the *Proclamation of Omar* were as follows:

"In the name of Allah, the merciful Benefactor!

This is the assurance granted to the inhabitants of Aelia by the servant of God, 'Umar, the commander of the Believers. He grants them safety for their persons, their goods, churches, crosses - be they in good or bad condition - and their worship in general. Their churches shall neither be turned over to dwellings nor pulled down; they and their dependents shall not be put to any prejudice and thus shall it fare with their crosses and goods. No constraint shall be imposed upon them

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<sup>895</sup> Al-Qur'ān 2:142-145.

<sup>896</sup> Al-Qur'ān 3:96.

in matters of religion and no one among them shall be harmed. No Jew shall be authorised to live in Aelia with them. The inhabitants of Aelia must pay the gizya in the same way as the inhabitants of other towns. It is for them to expel from their cities Roums (Byzantians) and outlaws. Those of the latter who leave shall be granted safe conduct... Those who would stay shall be authorised to, on condition that they pay the same gizya as the inhabitants of Aelia. Those of the inhabitants of Aelia who wish to leave with the Roums, to carry away their goods, abandon their churches and Crosses, shall likewise have their own safe conduct, for themselves and for their Crosses. Rural dwellers (ahl 'I-ard) who were already in the town before the murder of such a one, may stay and pay the gizya by the same title as the people of Aelia, or if they prefer they may leave with the Roums or return to their families. Nothing shall be exacted of them. Witnesses: Khaledb.A1-Walid, 'Amrb.A1-Alp, 'Abdar-Rahmanb. 'Awf Muawiya b. Abi Sufyan, who wrote these words, here, In the year 15.<sup>897</sup>

The Wikipedia reports that:

During his stay in Jerusalem, Umar was led by Sophronius to various holy sites, including the Temple Mount. Seeing the poor state of where the Temple once stood, Umar ordered the area cleared of refuse and debris before having a wooden mosque built on the site. The earliest account of such a structure is given by the Gallic bishop Arculf, who visited Jerusalem between 679 and 682, and describes a very primitive house of prayer able to accommodate up to 3,000 worshippers, constructed of wooden beams and boards over pre-existing ruins.

More than half a century after the capture of Jerusalem, in 691, the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik commissioned the construction of the Dome of the Rock over a large outcropping of bedrock on the Temple Mount. The 10th-century historian al-Muqaddasi wrote that Abd al-Malik built the shrine in order to compete in grandeur with the city's Christian churches. Whatever the intention, the impressive splendor and scale of the shrine is seen as having helped significantly in solidifying the attachment of Jerusalem to the early Muslim faith.<sup>898</sup>

History has no record of any killing, plunder, or other atrocities of the Muslims against the Christians or the Jews during the

<sup>897</sup> *Tareekh-e-Tabri* (Urdu), Vol. II, (Lahore: Darul-Isha'at, 2003), p. 807.

<sup>898</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. 'Seige of Jerusalem'.

capture of Jerusalem or thereafter. They were not only free for worshiping at their sanctuaries but also enjoyed full protection from the Islamic state to pursue their economic activities according to their own choice.

There had been no bloodshed, no destruction or disruption in the city. The lives and properties of all the citizens stood secured by the staunch followers of the faith of the Holy Prophet (pbAh). The city remained with the Muslims for about 461 years when the crusaders captured it in July 1099 AD and created hell on earth as stated earlier. Salah ad-Din Ayyubi reoccupied the city in 1187 AD. The magnanimity, mercy and tolerance displayed by Saladin during the reoccupation of the city of God was not only unbelievable but also unique in the history of the world. As a devout follower of Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) and keeping in view the traditions of Omer the great, Salahuddin attained such a zenith of moral excellence and ethical behavior which no other conqueror in the world could repeat since then. By his sublime veneration of the city of God and humaneness of the highest order, he proved himself not only an ideal representative of the teachings and traditions of the holy Prophet (pbAh) but also had behaved as a God-conscious Muslim and humble servant of the Almighty.

It is pertinent to note here that Saladin was not the only person to show mercy, magnanimity and generosity towards the vanquished people. All the Muslims around Saladin were the followers of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) due to which they did not have hearts and souls different from that of Saladin. In peace and war **they were obliged to follow the traditions of the messenger of Allah.** As such, whenever the western scholars pay a tribute to the unique character of mercy and forgiveness of Saladin, the same will be taken as appreciation for the moral excellence preached and practised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). Saladin alone neither claimed any appraisal himself nor do Muslims eulogize him like the heroes of the Christians. Saladin's credit lies only in God-consciousness and observation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) which has raised him far above all other generals in the world after him.

# MUSLIM HEROES AS DEFENDERS OF FAITH & LAND-I

## **Muslim Heroes of 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD**

The preceding chapter was devoted to enumerate some of the Islamic codes of War, the traditions of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) and demonstration of the same during the conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin. Although all the writers in the west extol the moral excellence of Salah-al-Din yet they take care not only to single out Saladin for his unique magnanimity and mercy. Instead of plainly admitting him as a true follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) like many other paragons of virtue among the Muslims, they try to pretend as if Saladin was something exceptional among them. Historians like Charles Mills quote that:

It is the generous remarks of an enemy that Saladin was nothing a barbarian but in name.

After praising his courtesy, clemency and other virtues, he says:

This action, worthy of a gentle and Christian knight.....

It is, therefore, strange to observe that in spite of an extensive record of the barbarities committed by the western nations from the Roman periods till today, they try to transfer their own barbarity to others. In spite of gentle Christian knighthood, they miserably fail to quote even a single example of humaneness among the Christian conquerors throughout their history. It would have been more commendable for him to frankly admit that Muslims in general surpassed moral excellence as against the European Christians. The writer as such had no moral integrity to frankly admit that Muslims in general far surpassed in their moral excellence over the

Christian knights throughout the history right from the time of the Romans till today.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh), his rightly guided successors i.e. Abu Bakr, Umar, Othman, Ali and Umar bin Abd-al-Aziz had no match as regards piety, justice, mercy and other virtues pleasing the Almighty. Umar the Great had undoubtedly been the greatest and the most successful ruler who had no peer in respect of his moral excellence and his administration throughout the world. There had been numerous other luminous figures among the Muslims from the time of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) till Saladin's conquest of Jerusalem and thereafter. In the present context, however, we shall be confining only to describing some selected Muslim heroes during the crusading periods.

#### ▪ **Alp-Arslan**

The Seljuk Sultan Tughril Beg died in 1063 and was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan then 26 years of age. He was a tall, strong and just ruler, generally magnanimous, swift to punish tyranny or extortion among his officials, and extremely charitable to the poor. He was also devoted to the study of history, listening with great pleasure and interest to chronicles of former kings and to works that threw light on their characters, instructions and methods of administration. He conquered Herath, Armenia, Georgia and Syria. Alp Arsalan rose to the height of his reputation during the battle of Manzikert where he defeated Greek Emperor Romanos IV who had an army of 100,000 persons with him. As against him, Alp Arslan had 15,000 heroic soldiers under his command.<sup>899</sup>

Romanos belonged to a powerful Cappadocian family and had close relations with the royal family as well as aristocratic nobles in Asia Minor. He had risen to the distinction only due to his military talents. After the death of Byzantine Emperor Constantine X, his widow Empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa was ruling the empire

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<sup>899</sup> Will Durant, *Story of Civilization, The Age of Faith*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 308.

when Romanos was convicted of attempting to usurp the throne of the sons of Constantine X Dukas in 1067. It is said that:

While waiting to receive his sentence from the regent Eudokia Makrembolitissa, he was summoned into her presence and advised that she had pardoned him and that she had furthermore chosen him to be her husband and the guardian of her sons as emperor.<sup>900</sup>

The regent made the above decision to have a powerful husband who could save not only the interests of the ruling family against the unscrupulous aspirants but also defend the empire against the Turks.<sup>901</sup> Instead of execution, therefore, Romanos IV was crowned as the Byzantine emperor. During his short reign (1068-1071), Romanos proved himself worthy of the choice by checking or repelling Seljuk attacks in Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia. In 1069, Romanos ordered the execution of all prisoners including a Seljuk chieftain who offered to pay an immense ransom for his life. Romanos had, therefore, been extremely offensive against the Turks. After achieving some initial successes, he also launched a big attack on Manzikert with an army of 100,000 people. Alp Arslan offered him reasonable terms of peace but Romanus rejected all such offers scornfully. Consequently, Romanos was not only defeated but also imprisoned by Alp Arslan. He, therefore, had earned for him humiliation as well as death sentence at the hands of Alp Arslan.

The magnanimity of Alp Arslan is evident from the following conversation said to have taken place after Romanos was brought as a prisoner before the Sultan.

Alp Arslan: What would you do if I was brought before you as a prisoner?

Romanos: Perhaps I'd kill you, or exhibit you in the streets of Constantinople.

Alp Arslan: My punishment is far heavier. I forgive you, and set you free.<sup>902</sup>

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<sup>900</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. Romanos IV Diogenes.

<sup>901</sup> ibid.

<sup>902</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. Alp Arslan.

Arslan treated him with generosity. After peace terms were agreed to, Arslan dismissed the Emperor, loaded with presents and respectfully attended by a military guard.<sup>903</sup>

According to Will Durant, after his defeat, Romanos was led before the Sultan:

What would have been your behavior," asked Arslan, "had fortune smiled upon your arms?" "I would have inflicted upon thy body many a stripe," answered Romanus. Arslan treated him with all courtesy, released him on the promise of a royal ransom, and dismissed him with rich gifts. A year later Arslan died by an Assassin's knife.<sup>904</sup>

In his ordinary life, Alp Arslan was a devout Muslim taking full care of the poor in his domain and was extremely loved and admired by the Muslims especially for justice and kind treatment to his subjects. We find no vices attached to his name.

#### ▪ ***Nizam al-Mulk Tusi***

Abu al-Ali Hasan ibn Ali bin Ishaq Tusi better known by his honorific title of Nizam al-Mulk Tusi (1018-1092 AD) had been a unique personality among the heroes of Islam. He was a great scholar, writer, reformer, and administrator of highest caliber. He had served as Vizir of Alp Arsalan for 20 years from 1043 to 1063 AD. It was with the assistance of Nizam al-Mulk that Alp Arsalan defeated Qultamash in 1064 AD. Being a great general, Nizam al-Mulk conquered most of the Caucasus region up to Georgia and Estkhar as well as Fars in Iran. He had been accompanying Alp Arsalan in all battles except Manzikert when the Sultan had deputed him towards Iran. It was, therefore, due to most outstanding qualities of the head and heart of Nizam al-Mulk that he also continued to serve as Vizir of Malik Shah Seljuq during all 20 years of his reign. He successfully contained Ghaznavids in Khurasan, rolled back the Fatimids in Syria, defeated other Seljuk pretenders to the throne, invaded Georgia and reduced it to a tributary state.

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<sup>903</sup> ibid.

<sup>904</sup> Will Durant, *Story of Civilization, The Age of Faith*, p. 308.

Nizam al-Mulk enjoyed absolute powers throughout the reign of Malik Shah Seljuk (r. 1072-1092) the son and successor of Alp Arslan. Perhaps the greatest and unforgettable contribution of Malik Shah was the promotion of the religious education by establishing various institutions in the prominent cities throughout the sultanate of the Seljuks. These institutions were known as Nizamiahs. Most famous among them had been Madrassa Nizamya at Baghdad. The curriculum of these institutions was known as *Dars-e-Nizami* which survives till date in the Sunni world with minor changes in the same. The *Nizamiyah* at Baghdad was also famous for its illustrious teachers like Imam al-Haramain, Imam Ghazali, Sayyed Abdul Qadir Gilani and many other distinguished figures of the Islamic world. Nizam al-Mulk was assassinated en route from Eshphahan to Baghdad on 14 Oct 1092 being stabbed by a member of the assassins (Hashashins), sent by the notorious Hassan-bin-Sabbah near Nahavand, as he was being carried on his litter. The killer approached him disguised as a dervish.

There never had been any other Vizir to match the devotion, the capabilities and integrity of Nizam al-Mulk Tusi throughout the Muslim History. *Siyasat-Nama* or the Book of the Art of Rule as one of his major works of Persian prose is a guide book for the rulers to administer their realm with honesty, truth, justice and diligence to avoid any deterioration or decline in this world and to earn blessings of the Lord in the Hereafter. In this respect "Siyasat Nama" can be considered as an antithesis of Arthashastra of Chankya in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC India and "The Prince" of Machiavelli in 1532 AD in Italy.

#### ▪ **Malik Shah Seljuk**

Malik Shah Seljuk (r. 1072-1092 AD) the distinguished son and successor of Alp Arslan was the greatest of the Seljuk Sultans. It was during his rule that his general Sulayman had completed the conquest of Asia Minor. He himself took Transoxiana as far as Bukhara and

Kashger. Besides reoccupying Arz-e-Rum, Malatya, Cyprus, Tarsus and Antioch from the Byzantines, he posed great threat to Constantinople and other territories on the border of his sultanate.

Malik Shah Seljuk was well known for his valor, administration and piety. He not only expanded his sultanate to vast regions in the north as well as south, but also proved to be an enlightened person to improve the prosperity and welfare of the people by promoting education, justice and better administration throughout his domain. He was one of the most popular sultans of his times. The great Muslim hero died being poisoned in 1092 AD. His death was the great opportune moment for the Christians to move towards the Muslim lands and **they started the first crusade in 1095**. Consequently, within 7 years of the death of Malik Shah and his Vizir Nizam al-Mul Toosi, the crusaders had conquered and destroyed Aleppo, Odessa, Antioch, Marrah and Jerusalem massacring most of the population irrespective of their faith.

#### ▪ ***Yusuf Bin Tashfin***

Yusuf bin Tashfin (1019-1106 AD) enjoyed great repute for his piety, chivalry, and administration. Before 1061 AD, he was appointed commander of the Almoravid Army in Morocco by his cousin Abu Bakr who had gone to Sahara to put down tribal uprisings there. On return of Abu Bakr sometime later, Yusuf bin Tashfin chose not to relinquish the command to him. Abu Bakr, therefore, again returned to Sahara while Yusuf bin Tashfin took great pains to consolidate the lands under his control. He captured Faiz in 1075 and Tangier in 1079 AD. Taliman, Ceute, Algier, Tenes and Oran were captured during 1080-83 AD.<sup>905</sup> He is also regarded as cofounder of famous Moroccan city Marrakech. After the fall of Toledo in Al-Andalus 1085 AD, at the hands of Alfonso VI of Leon and Castille Al-Mutamid bin Abbad the last ruler of the Taifa at Seville had prayed to Yusuf to rescue Zargoza, Seville and other small states from

<sup>905</sup> Wikipedia, s.v. Yusuf bin Tashfin.

Alfonso VI. Yusuf bin Tashfin reached Seville in 1086 and accompanied by Amirs of Seville, Granada and Taifa of Malaga, he marched to Badajoz.

Alfonso VI abandoned the siege of Zaragoza, recalled his troops from Valencia and took along Sancho I of Aragon to Badajoz. In the battle on 23 Oct 1086 AD, at least half of the Castilian army was lost while King Alfonso VI himself was severely injured.<sup>906</sup> Due to the death of the heir of Yusuf bin Tashfin, he had to return to Morocco before re-conquering the city of Toledo. Although, the battle added no territories to the Muslims, yet it effectively halted the Christian advance for several generations, thereafter.

Yusuf bin Tashfin had to make three more expeditions to Al-Andalusia to rescue the Muslim states in trouble. In 1088 AD, he also had to meet a defeat at the hands of revived Christian forces.<sup>907</sup> All other battles were won by him. In 1100 AD Yusuf had finally conquered Valencia from Alfonso and Gimina the wife of El-Cid who left the city after setting fire to the great mosque in the city.<sup>908</sup> Thus at the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century Ibn Tashfin had succeeded in uniting Morocco and Spain under Berber rule. Yusuf was a wise, pious and devout Muslim of his time. He was a champion fighter as well as an honorable Muslim ruler who crushed the Christian powers in such a manner that enabled the Muslims to retain Granada and other territories in Spain up to 1492 AD.

Had there been no Yusuf bin Tashfeen to check and to suppress the rising Christian storms, the Muslim Rule in Spain, would have ended with the impending fall of Granada in about 1089 i.e. about ten years earlier than the Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. It was Yusuf who continued to reverse the Christian invasions in Spain again and again giving new life to the Muslims who lingered on to hold substantial parts of Andalusia

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<sup>906</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.Battle of Sagrajas.

<sup>907</sup> *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, (The Gale Group Inc. 2004), 'Yusuf bin Tashfin'.

<sup>908</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.'Yusuf bin Tashfin'.

for about 400 years after the death of Yusuf bin Tashfeen.

#### ▪ ***Nur al-Din Zengi***

Both Imad al-Din (r. 1127-1146 AD) and his son Nur al-Din Zengi (r. 1146-1176 AD) had been great Muslim heroes who fought and won many battles against the crusaders. Due to certain lapses in his character, Imad al-Din could not be counted among the ideal Muslim heroes. Noor-ul-Din, however, enjoyed all round fame for his valor, magnanimity and personal virtues. His god-consciousness, charity, justice and kind treatment with the human beings under his domain depicts him as an ideal Muslim hero of the time. Nur al-Din succeeded to obtain full control of Egypt. He named Shirkuh as his vizier in the newly conquered territory in Egypt. Later on Shirkuh was succeeded by his nephew Saladin the most renowned Muslim hero during the crusades.

## **Saladin the Great**

Although volumes could be written to describe achievements and magnanimity of Saladin from the Muslim sources, yet keeping in view our readers in the West, we shall be confining ourselves to reproduce certain quotations only from the Christian writers.

#### ▪ ***The Battle of Hittim***

Saladin had been fighting against the crusaders for many years. Ultimately he succeeded to give a crushing defeat to the united armies of Jerusalem and the crusaders at Hittim, 3 Kms west of Tiberias. It has been said that:

Saladin defeated the Christians at Tiberias in July, A.D. 1187, and advanced to Jerusalem. Unwilling to stain the venerated city with blood, he offered the people money and settlements in Syria if they would capitulate. They refused, but prayer was a poor defence, and after several days' fighting they threw themselves on his mercy.<sup>909</sup>

<sup>909</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 358-359.

Saladin's intention to maintain sanctity of the city of God has also been described in the following:

Saladin declared his unwillingness to stain with human blood a spot which even the Turks held in reverence, as having been sanctified by the presence of many of God's messengers. He offered the people, on condition of the surrender of the city, money and settlements in Syria. Prudence suggested the acceptance of this offer, but, clinging to that feeling of superstition which had given birth to the holy wars, the Christians declared that they would not resign to the infidels the place where the Saviour had died. Saladin was indignant at this rejection of his kindness, and swore to enter the place sword in hand, and retaliate the dreadful carnage which the Franks had made in the days of Godfrey of Bouillon.<sup>910</sup>

#### ▪ **Saladin Reoccupies Jerusalem**

During 14 days of the siege, the Christians came to realize the fatal consequences of the forceful capitulation of the city. Foot and Wheeler describe about Saladin that:

"He consented to accept the city and to spare the inhabitants. **The Greek and Oriental Christians were permitted to live under his dominion**; but it was stipulated that in forty days all the Franks and Latins should evacuate Jerusalem and be safely conducted to the seaports of Syria and Egypt; that ten pieces of gold should be paid for each man, five for each woman, and one for every child; and that those who were unable to purchase their freedom should be detained in perpetual slavery."<sup>911</sup>

Mills also observes the same:

The Latins then recollected the proffered clemency of Saladin, and a deputation of them implored a renewal of it. But he urged the force of the oath which he had taken, and that it was ridiculous to capitulate for a fallen town. But, said he, if you will surrender the city to me, I will behave to you with mercy, and allow you to redeem the inhabitants. After some deliberation, the Christians resolved to trust the generosity of the conqueror. Saladin stipulated that the military and nobles should be escorted to Tyre, and that the Latin population should become slaves if they were not ransomed at the rate of

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<sup>910</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 438.

<sup>911</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 358-359.

ten crowns of gold for a man five for a woman and one for a child.

After four days had been consumed by the miserable inhabitants in weeping over and embracing the holy sepulcher and other sacred places the Latins left the city and passed through the enemy's camp. Children of all ages clung round their mothers, and the strength of the fathers was used in bearing away some little portion of their household furniture. In solemn procession, the clergy; the queen, and her retinue of ladies followed. Saladin advanced to meet them, and his heart melted with compassion, when they approached him in the attitude and with the air of suppliants: The softened warrior uttered some words of pity, and the women, encouraged by his sympathizing tenderness, declared that, one word of his would remove their distress. "Our fortunes and possessions", they continued, "you may freely enjoy; but restore to us our fathers, our husbands, and our brothers. With these dear objects we cannot be entirely miserable. They will take care of us, and that God whom we reverence; and who provides for the birds of the air, will not forget our children." **It is the generous remark of an enemy that Saladin was in nothing a barbarian but in name.**<sup>912</sup> With courteous clemency he released all the prisoners whom the women requested, and loaded them with presents.<sup>913</sup> This action, worthy of a gentle and Christian knight, was not the consequence of a transient feeling of humanity; for when he

<sup>912</sup> We invite the readers to ponder the bigotry of the observer describing generosity of the remarks of the enemy. The enemy, however, could not get rid of his bias against the Muslims and the Eastern nations. In spite of appreciating moral excellence of Saladin he still labels him a barbarian though in name. Due to his narrow-mindedness, he could not get rid of the misconception and misrepresentation that all nations other than the western Christians were barbarians. He lived under the faith that only the Christian nations in the West could be the civilized people irrespective of the worst barbarities committed by them throughout the world. Other people remain brutes in spite of their rectitude, moral excellence, tolerance and magnanimity towards all the human beings on earth.

<sup>913</sup> Saladin had perhaps been the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ruler in the recorded history of the world who released the prisoners of war with valuable gifts. He, however, had no uniqueness in it. In doing so, he was merely following the tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh) who had paid from his own pocket to release the prisoners held by Banu Fuzara and Bani Sulaim during the battle of Hunain in 8 AH (630 AD). Alp Arslan too, had released Emperor Romanos from the prison with valuable gifts and protocol. There might have been numerous other followers of the Holy Prophet (pbAh) pursuing the same practice yet their actions have not been reported by the historians.

entered the city of Jerusalem, and heard of the tender care with which the military friars of St. John treated the sick, he allowed ten of the order to remain in their hospital till they could complete their work of humanity.

The infidels<sup>914</sup> were once more established in Jerusalem. The great cross was taken down from the church of the sepulchre, and for two days dragged through the mire of the streets. The bells of the churches were melted, and the floors and walls of the mosque of Omar were purified with Damascene rose-water. **Prayers and thanksgivings were offered to Heaven for the victory; all individual merit was forgotten and the conquest of Jerusalem was attributed to the bounty of God, and his desire for the universal influence of Islamism.**<sup>915</sup>

On 2 October 1187, the day when the Muslims celebrated the Prophet's Night Journey and *mi'raj*, Saladin and his troops

<sup>914</sup> Fidelity can be defined as 'continuing loyalty to a person, state, cause, faith or a tradition'. Both Romans and the Christians could, therefore, be taken as faithful people keeping in view their loyalty and adhesion to Greco-roman culture, mythology and traditions of the Old. Except for utilizing the advanced religious terminology and infrastructure of the Jewish religion including hierarchy in the church, they stuck to polytheism in the guise of monotheism and the Roman law and traditions instead of the law and teachings of Moses and the Prophets of Israel including Jesus Christ. Teachings of St. Paul a Roman citizen and self-claimed apostle of Jesus Christ towards the gentiles superseded and replaced the faith and teachings of earlier prophets from Adam to Moses. In this sense, therefore, the western Christians can be taken as the faithful one. From the religious point of view, however, infidelity means turning away from true faith in the monotheism preached by all the true prophets of the Almighty. The term is also applied to loyalty between a husband and a wife. From both aspects, therefore, the Christians deserve to be counted among the infidels. The first and the most important commandment of the Lord as also endorsed by Jesus Christ reads that: "*I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" (Exo 20:2 KJV). The next commandment was that: "*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, (...)*" (Exo 20:4-5 KJV). As regards Muslims, they stick to the afore-stated faith of Jesus Christ and all the prophets of the Lord before him. Only the Christians have turned their back towards their Lord and His law. Let them, therefore, reconsider their position to claim fidelity with the Almighty or His prophets.

<sup>915</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 439-442.

entered Jerusalem as conquerors. The sultan kept his word. **Not a single Christian was killed.** The barons could easily afford to ransom themselves, but the poor people could not, and they became prisoners of war. Large numbers were released, however, because Saladin was moved to tears by the plight of the families who were behind separated when they were taken into slavery. Al-Adil, Saladin's brother, was so distressed that he asked for a thousand prisoners for his own use and released them on the spot. All the Muslims were scandalized to see the richer Christians escaping with their wealth without making any attempt to ransom their fellow countrymen. When the Muslim historian Imad ad-Din saw Patriarch Heraklius leaving the city with his chariots groaning under the weight of his treasure, he begged Saladin to confiscate this wealth to redeem the remaining prisoners. But Saladin refused; **oaths and treaties must be kept to the letter.** "Christians everywhere will remember the kindness we have done them." Saladin was right. Christians in the West were uneasily aware that this Muslim ruler had behaved in a far more "**Christian" manner**"<sup>916</sup> than had their own Crusaders when they conquered Jerusalem. They evolved legends that made Saladin a sort of honorary Christian<sup>917</sup>; some of these tales even asserted that the sultan had been secretly baptized.

The Crusading experiment in Jerusalem was almost over. The Muslims would try to re-create the old system of coexistence and integration in al-Quds, but the violent dislocation of Crusader rule had damaged relations between Islam and the Christian West at a fundamental level. It had been the Muslims' first experience of the Western world, and it has not been forgotten to this day. Their sufferings at the hands of the Crusaders had also affected the Muslims' view of their Holy City. Henceforth, there would be a defensiveness in their devotion to al-Quds, which would become a more aggressively Islamic City than hitherto.<sup>918</sup>

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<sup>916</sup> What was the Christian manner, the historians have never been able to quote any example of the same. The Christian manner displayed during the crusading periods or thereafter, however, had been extremely despicable having nothing good in it. The writer had no temerity to confess that the Islamic manner exhibited by Saladin far surpassed any moral excellence ever attained by the Christians.

<sup>917</sup> Thank God instead of being an honorary Christian, Saladin was a true follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh). He had nothing in him of Christian treachery, cruelty, fornication, cannibalism, rapine and inhumanity shown by the Christian heroes of the crusading period.

<sup>918</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem*, p. 293-294.

To release the outsiders in the city, Salahuddin told them that:

Each man should pay ten pieces of gold for his liberty, and two women or ten children should be reckoned as one man whilst of the poor, who possessed not even a gold coin, seven thousand should be set free for the sum of thirty thousand besants, to be paid out of King Henry's treasure, the remnant of which was still hoarded in the house of the Hospitallers. Forty days were allowed for the ransoming; after that, all that remained became slaves. The articles of capitulation were signed on Friday the 2nd of October, the Feast of St. Leger. **By a strange coincidence, it was the 27th of Rejeb, the anniversary of the blessed Leylat el-Miraj**, when the prophet of Islam dreamed his wonderful dream, and visited in his sleep the Holy City which his followers had now recovered after ninety years of Christian occupation.<sup>919</sup>

The writer adorns Slahuddin in the following words:

Never did Saladin show himself greater than during this memorable surrender. His guards, commanded by responsible emirs, kept order in every street, and prevented violence and insult, insomuch that no ill-usage of the Christians was ever heard of. Every exit was in his hands, and a trusty lord was set over David's gate to receive the ransoms as each citizen came forth.

Then began a strangely pathetic scene. First Balian brought the thirty thousand gold besants, and the seven thousand poor who were ransomed by the King of England's treasure were allowed to shamble out. There followed burgher after burgher, money in hand, with their families and sometimes with poor dependents who could not ransom themselves. Saracen soldiers and merchants thronged the city and bought the goods of the departing citizens, so that each might raise the price of freedom. Kukbury<sup>920</sup> ransomed a thousand Armenians of Edessa, and sent them to their homes; and others were not less benevolent.<sup>921</sup>

#### ▪ ***Magnanimity of Salah al-Din***

It was due to extreme veneration of the Almighty and His sanctuary at Jerusalem that Saladin made such generous offers to the inhabitants of the city which

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<sup>919</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, p. 229-230.

<sup>920</sup> Kukbury was emir of Harran and Irbil, a.h. 587 (AD 1191).

<sup>921</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, p. 230-231.

distinguishes him from all great generals in the history. According to Stanley Lane Pool, Saladin abhorred to besiege Jerusalem or to shed blood in the Holy City. He Writes:

The Sultan was anxious to spare the Holy City the misery of a siege. "I believe" he told them, "that Jerusalem is the House of God, as you also believe, and I will not willingly lay siege to the House of God or put it to the assault." To obtain it in peace and amity he offered to leave the inhabitants free to fortify the city and cultivate the land for five leagues<sup>922</sup> round, and even to supply them plentifully with money and food, until the following Pentecost, on condition that when Pentecost came, if they saw a prospect of being rescued, they should keep the Holy City; but if they saw no chance of succour, then they must surrender Jerusalem, and he would conduct them and their possessions safely to Christian soil.<sup>923</sup>

But the delegates from Jerusalem refused it without hesitation. If God pleased, they said, they would never surrender the city where the Saviour died for them. So Saladin, pleased at their devotion, promised them on his oath that he would never take it except in the honourable way, by the sword. The Sultan's chivalry is the more remarkable, since Jerusalem itself had lately presented a signal example of bad faith. After Balian of Ibelin had escaped from the field of Hittin, he sent to Saladin, begging him to give him a safe-conduct to go to Jerusalem and bring his wife and children back to Tyre. The petition was at once granted, on the conditions that Balian should only stay one night in the city, and should never more bear arms against the Sultan. When he arrived at Jerusalem he was welcomed with delight as a deliverer, for there were no knights of rank there, and he was made commander and guardian of the city by universal acclamation. In vain he protested that he had given his oath to Saladin and could not honourably stay or help in the defence. "**I absolve you,"<sup>924</sup> said the Patriarch, " from your sin and your oath,** which it were a greater sin in you to keep than to break ; for it were a perpetual disgrace upon you to leave Jerusalem in this strait and go away, nor should you ever have honour again whithersoever you went." So Balian stayed, and since there were but two knights in the place,

<sup>922</sup> One 'league' was most commonly defined as three miles. 5 leagues, therefore, denoted an area of 15 miles around Jerusalem.

<sup>923</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), p. 224.

<sup>924</sup> Look at the self acquired divine powers of the bishops to forgive and absolve the people from their sins.

who had also fled from Hittin, he knighted thirty burghers.<sup>925</sup> The Patriarch opened the treasury for him, and the garrison went out and bought provisions for the siege. Fugitives had come in from all sides, and there were reckoned to be 60,000 men in the city, besides women and children.

The patience of Saladin was not exhausted even after this dishonour. Perhaps he believed that Balian could not help himself; and far from showing rancour, he gave him a fresh proof of his confidence. Balian again sent to him at Ascalon to beg him to give another safe-conduct, to remove his wife and children to Tripolis; he explained that he was forcibly withheld from keeping his former promise. **Instead of reproaches, Saladin sent an escort of fifty horse, who carried out his wishes.**<sup>926</sup>

On 2 October 1187 Saladin and his disciplined army took the city peacefully. He was true to his word and the Franks were allowed to leave unmolested. **Saladin sent groups of armed soldiers into the city to ensure that there was no looting or rampage.** He then set about cleaning up the city, restoring the al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock to sacred use for Muslims. Although he was urged by his compatriots to destroy the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he merely ordered it to be closed for three days, then reopened to pilgrims. **The manner in which they reoccupied Jerusalem was a great and lasting credit to Saladin and his men, and should have shamed the Christian knights of 1099 had they been alive to see it.**

Saladin's reputation for magnanimity and piety was enhanced by his treatment of the ransomed prisoners. Forty days were allowed for the Christians to raise the necessary ransoms. Throughout, Saladin behaved with the utmost generosity: when his brother, growing distressed at the vast numbers of captives, asked for some to be spared, Saladin freed 1,000; he gave another 700 their freedom in response to a request by the Patriarch of Jerusalem; and set another 500 free as a tribute to Balian.<sup>927</sup> He then went even further, freeing the elderly and the infirm and all the husbands of women already freed.<sup>928</sup>

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<sup>925</sup> A citizen of a town or city.

<sup>926</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, p. 224-226.

<sup>927</sup> Balian of Ibelin (1143 – 1193) was a crusader noble of the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the 12th century. He had negotiated the terms of surrender agreement of Jerusalem with Saladin.

<sup>928</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 125.

### ▪ **Lamentable Lust of the Bishops**

The readers have already observed the devotion of laymen among the Christians and many of their knights sacrificing their homes, lands, valuables, comforts and all earthly involvements to join the expeditions in the cause of faith. One could, however, discern a clear-cut contrast between the sentiments of the ordinary Christians and the so-called spiritual heads of the faith. The anxiety to arrange funds immediately to finance the expedition, most of the Christian knights and people were prepared to dispose of their properties at the cheapest rates. **The Christian bishops took due advantage of the same.** Instead of financing the crusaders from the sources collected by them in the name of God, they utilized their treasury to enrich themselves more and more by purchasing the lands and properties from the crusaders. As reported earlier Godfrey of Bouillon took out loans on most of his lands or sold them to the bishop of Liege and bishop of Worden. With this money he gathered thousands of knights to fight in the Holy Land. Another conspicuous example of the bishop's lust for wealth at the cost of faith and people can be observed in the following. Lane-Pool records that:

The Patriarch, who had neither morals nor conscience, carried off the treasures of the churches, gold chalices and monstrances, and even the gold plate of the Holy Sepulchre, besides a vast hoard of his own, which had been better spent on ransoming the poor who still remained. When the Saracen emirs urged Saladin not to let the old rascal make off with his plunder, he replied, "No, I will not break faith with him," and the Patriarch got off like the rest for his ten besants. It was left for the Mohammedan King to teach the Christian priest the meaning of charity. For forty days the melancholy procession trooped forth from the gate of David, and the term of grace expired. Yet there still remained thousands of poor people whom the niggardly burghers and religious houses had left to slavery. Then el-Adil came to his brother and said : " Sire, I have helped you by God's grace to conquer the land and this city, I therefore pray you give me a thousand slaves from the poor people within." To Saladin's question, what he would do with them, he answered he would do as pleased himself. Then the Sultan gave him the thousand slaves, and el-Adil set them all free as an offering to God. Then came the Patriarch and

Balian, and begged likewise, and Saladin gave them another thousand slaves, and they were set free. Then said Saladin to his officers : "My brother has made his alms, and the Patriarch and Balian have made theirs ; now I would fain make mine." And he ordered his guards to proclaim throughout the streets of Jerusalem that all the old people who could not pay were free to go forth. And they came forth from the postern of St. Lazarus, and their going lasted from the rising of the sun until night fell. "Such was the charity which Saladin did, of poor people without number.<sup>929</sup>

#### ▪ ***Courtesy of Salah al-Din***

"Then I shall tell you," says the Squire of Balian," of the great courtesy which Saladin showed to the wives and daughters of knights, who had fled to Jerusalem when their lords were killed or made prisoners in battle. When these ladies were ransomed and had come forth from Jerusalem, they assembled and went before Saladin crying mercy. When Saladin saw them he asked who they were and what they sought. And it was told him that they were the dames and damsels of knights who had been taken or killed in battle. Then he asked what they wished, and they answered for God's sake have pity on them ; for the husbands of some were in prison, and of others were dead, and they had lost their lands, and in the name of God let him counsel and help them. **When Saladin saw them weeping, he had great compassion for them, and wept himself for pity.** And he bade the ladies whose husbands were alive to tell him where they were captives, and as soon as he could go to the prisons he would set them free. (And all were released wherever they were found.) **After that he commanded that to the dames and damsels whose lords were dead there should be handsomely distributed from his own treasure, to some more and others less, according to their estate.** And he gave them so much that they gave praise to God and published abroad the kindness and honour which Saladin had done to them."<sup>930</sup>

#### ▪ ***Generosity and Selflessness***

A great historian writes that:

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<sup>929</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Saladin*, p. 231-232.

<sup>930</sup> ibid, p. 232-233.

On overthrowing the Fatimid caliphate, Salah distributed its accumulated treasures, one of which was an historical seventeen dirham sapphire as weighed by ibn-al-Athir in person, among his retainers and troops, keeping nothing for himself. Nor did he touch Nur-al-Din's estate; he left it to the deceased ruler's heir. **He himself left on his death forty-seven dirhams and a gold piece.** Among the Arabs his name, with Harun's and Baybars, heads the list of popular favourites to the present day. In Europe he touched the fancy of English minstrels as well as modern novelists' and is still considered a paragon of chivalry.<sup>931</sup>

One of such sources reports about Salahuddin that:

With the simplicity and justice of his uncle, the great Noureddin, he combined a chivalry which was all his own. He was sometimes cruel, but more often humane; a strict Mohammedan, but "otherwise of enlarged mind, great heart, generous and gay"<sup>932</sup>, accessible to every mental stimulus or social impression." He was affable and patient with the meanest of his servants, and accessible to the poorest suppliant against himself or his ministers. **His liberality was boundless, and at the time of his death only forty seven Drachms of silver and one piece of gold were found in his treasury.**<sup>933</sup>

Even John J. Pool gives tribute to Saladin:

**Saladin** is described as a brave, a wise, and a chivalrous prince. Though possessed of enormous wealth he spent little on himself, but gave with lavish generosity the most costly gifts to those who deserved his favour. "**The garment of Saladin was a coarse woollen; water was his only drink. Both in faith and practice he was a rigid Mussulman. He ever deplored that the defence of religion had not allowed him to accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca ; but at the stated hours, five times each day, he devoutly prayed with his brethren : and his perusal of the Koran on horseback between approaching armies may be quoted as a proof, however ostentatious, of piety and**

<sup>931</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1963), p. 652.

<sup>932</sup> The writer seems to be utterly ignorant of the fact that no one except a strict Mohammedan could ever display the enlarged mind, great heart, magnanimity and self-restraint like that of Slahuddin which was entirely due to his following the precepts of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbAh).

<sup>933</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 357-358.

courage.<sup>934</sup>

He died on the 3rd of March, A.D. 1193, at Damascus. "Take this cloak," said he on his deathbed to his servant, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the ruler of the East could take but one garment with him into the grave." **By his last will Saladin ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan.**

Saladin paid the ransom of thousands of the poorest himself. Malek Adel followed his example, redeeming two thousand. Eventually only about an eighth of the inhabitants were unredeemed, and many of these embraced Mohammedanism. Unlike the brutal Crusaders, who massacred without distinction of age or sex, Saladin melted with compassion at the tears of women, and when they begged of him their fathers, husbands and brothers, he granted their request and loaded them with presents. Michaud pays a warm tribute to this noble infidel. "He rendered to the mothers their children, and to the wives their husbands, among the captives. Several Christians had abandoned their furniture and most precious effects, and carried on their shoulders their old and enfeebled parents or their sick and infirm friends. Saladin was touched (attendri) by this spectacle, and recompensed with his charities the virtue and the piety of his enemies. Taking pity on all unfortunates, he allowed the Knights of the Hospital to remain in the city to tend the pilgrims, and those who were prevented by grave maladies from leaving Jerusalem."

Gibbon justly says that "in these acts of mercy the virtue of Saladin deserves our admiration and love."<sup>935</sup>

#### ▪ **The Humanity of Saladin**

Saladin's humanity was in striking contrast with the villainy of the nearest Christian prince. "Many of the Christians who left Jerusalem," says Mills, "went to Antioch: but Bohemond not only denied them hospitality, but even stripped them. They marched into the Saracenian country, and were well received." Michaud gives some striking details of Christian inhumanity to the exiles from Jerusalem. Repulsed by their brethren of the East, they wandered miserably about Syria, many dying of grief and hunger. Tripoli shut its gates against

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<sup>934</sup> John J. Pool, *Studies in Muhammadanism*, p. 299-300.

<sup>935</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 359-360.

them, and "one woman, urged by despair, cast her infant into the sea, cursing the Christians who refused them succor."<sup>936</sup>

### **▪ Nicetas Contrasts Crusaders with Saladin**

Referring to the bestialities of the crusaders at Constantinople, it has been reported that:

Nicetas<sup>937</sup>, the Byzantine historian, whose daughter was with difficulty preserved from violation, reproaches the Crusaders with having surpassed the infidels in barbarity; he reminds them of the example of **Saladin's soldiers, who, when masters of Jerusalem, neither violated the modesty of matrons and virgins, nor subjected the Christians to fire, sword, hunger, and nakedness.** Churches were despoiled as well as other buildings. Some of these scenes of sacrilegious plunder are inimitably described by Gibbon.

It was further reported about the crusaders that:

"After stripping the gems and pearls, they converted the chalices into drinking cups; their tables, on which they gamed and feasted, were covered with the pictures of Christ and the saints; and they trampled underfoot the most venerable objects of the Christian worship. In the cathedral of St. Sophia the ample veil of the sanctuary was rent asunder for the sake of the golden fringe; and the altar, a monument of art and riches, was broken in pieces and shared among the captors. Their mules and horses were laden with the wrought silver and gilt carvings which they tore down from the doors and pulpit; and if the beasts stumbled under the burden, they were stabbed by their impatient drivers, and the holy pavement streamed with their impure blood. A prostitute was seated on the throne of the patriarch; and the daughter of Belial, as she is styled, sang and danced in the church to ridicule the hymns and processions of the Orientals."<sup>938</sup>

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<sup>936</sup> ibid, p. 360-361.

<sup>937</sup> Nicetas the bishop and historian (1155-1217 AD).

<sup>938</sup> Foote & Wheeler, p. 366-368.

## MUSLIM HEROES AS DEFENDERS OF FAITH & LAND-II

The preceding chapter had ended with different quotations from the English writers about Saladin the Great. Only one great Muslim hero could not be mentioned there. We, therefore, make a short reference to him in the following.

### ▪ ***Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibars***

Baibars (r. 1260-1277 AD) was one of the commanders of the Egyptian forces that inflicted a defeat on the Seventh Crusade of King Louis IX of France. He also led the vanguard of the Egyptian army at **the Battle of Ain Jalut against the Mongols/Tatars in 1260 AD, which marked the first substantial defeat of the Mongol army anywhere in Asia. The battle of Ain al-Jalut proved to be a turning point in the history of Mongols who never could make any further advance in Egypt thereafter.** For the shortage of space at our disposal, it may suffice to reproduce an excerpt on the legacy of Baibars from the Wikipedia:

Baibars was a popular ruler in the Muslim World who had defeated the crusaders in three campaigns, and the Mongols in the **Battle of Ain Jalut which many scholars deem of great macro-historical importance.** In order to support his military campaigns, Baibars commissioned arsenals, warships and cargo vessels. He was also arguably the first to employ explosive hand cannons in war, at the Battle of Ain Jalut. His military campaign also extended into Libya and Nubia.<sup>939</sup>

### **Heroes among Ottoman Sultans**

The western Christendom had been taking Ottoman Sultans as their worst despised enemies. They,

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<sup>939</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.'Baibars'.

therefore, spared no occasion to find some fault with them. Their dislike for the Ottomans cannot, however, erase from the annals of the history the merits and excellence of characters of most of the Muslim Sultans. They continued to rule over vast lands stretching over three continents for more than six hundred years. The Ottomans had been staunch Muslims who always administered their government strictly under the law of the Almighty. While there never had been any Christian territory, kingdom or any empire to impose the law of the Bible or the Law of Christ by whatever name they call it yet the Muslims had usually been surrendering themselves to the will of the God. All courts operated under the Law of Shariah and even the Sultans used to submit themselves before the Shariah Courts. Although most of the Muslim rulers had themselves been observant of the Shariah Law yet exceptions had also been there. Hence in spite of moral laxity and lethargy of some of the Muslim rulers, the *Ummah* as a whole did not lose the sight of the do's and don'ts of the commandments of the Lord.

There had been an uninterrupted chain of 36 Ottoman sultans. Most of them were statesmen of high caliber, military commanders of exceptional ability, men of great learning with remarkable athletic prowess, patrons of arts, poets, calligraphers and benefactors of mankind. Hardly any sultan might have amassed the worldly wealth. None of them imposed exorbitant taxation on his subjects to make miserable the lives of the citizens. People of all races, colors, regions, or creeds have been living peacefully under them fully protected by law and justice in the realm which during its hey day extended over 7.7 million m<sup>2</sup> i.e. 20 million km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>940</sup> In spite of this, almost each of the sultans had been a gem of unique qualities paying more attention to the welfare of the people than anything else within his territory. During more than 600 years of their reign, they continued to serve their subjects with such justice, generosity and diligence that no other state could boast of a better look after of their subjects than the Ottoman Sultans. Service

<sup>940</sup> Salih Gulen, *The Ottoman Sultans*, p. ix.

of humanity had, therefore, been the greatest of the achievements of the Ottoman Empire.

The space at our disposal, however, does not allow us to enumerate the qualities or the characteristics of each of the sultans. We may, therefore, mention only six exemplary figures out of 36 great Sultans in the following:

▪ ***Osman (Othman) Ghazi***

Osman Ghazi (r. 1299-1324) had been the founder of the dynasty. He was a strict Muslim who very often consulted Sheikh Edebali and Faqih Dursun in all matters pertaining to his administration of justice and other governing policies to conform the same to the Islamic law. Although his primary method of conquest against Byzantium was through Ghaza but he made no forced conversions of the vanquished. For this, he always resorted to warming the hearts of the people by his magnanimity and preaching with good reasoning to obtain the good will of the conquered people for conversion to Islam. The Byzantine sources introduce Osman Ghazi **as the most gallant commander that ever made incursion to the lands of Byzantium.**<sup>941</sup>

Without going into further details we end description about him by quoting the following:

Osman Gazi assigned his son Orhan as his de facto successor in the last years of his life when his illness did not allow him to rule. It is narrated that Osman Gazi looked forward to hearing from Orhan Gazi the good news that Bursa had been conquered. He then requested his tomb to be built there. In 1324, after serving as the head of the Kayis for twenty-seven years, he passed away. **Osman Gazi wished that his son always conform to Islamic Law, protect and accommodate his subjects, seek consultation for state affairs, remain just, and defend his people at all costs.** Osman Gazi was a leader who had always been concerned with his principality and subjects. He lived a decent life and always took great pleasure in being among his people. He paid utmost attention to consultation in state affairs and applied

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<sup>941</sup> ibid, p. 4.

the decisions that came from the deliberative body. His remaining assets included not more than a piece of cloth for his turban (*sarik*), which is about six-feet long, an armor set for his horse, a saddlebag, one single garment, a saltshaker, a spoon holder, a pair of boots, a prayer beads, an elegant sword, a shield and spear, a few horses, and several sheep grazed to sacrifice for his guests. Osman Gazi set a good example for future “guests of throne” of how an ideal sultan should live on a modest substance.<sup>942</sup>

### ▪ ***Orhan Gazi (1324-1362)***

After the conquest of Bursa, Orhan Ghazi conquered the forts on the north western Anatolian Coast including Kocaeli, Kartal and Aydos reaching the straits of Constantinople on the Anatolian side. Subsequently, he also conquered Iznik in 1331, Gemlik in 1334 and Izmit 1337.

The sources narrate that Orhan Gazi had built two mosque complexes in Bursa and Iznik for various benevolent services for the community. He sometimes served soup to the poor in the soup kitchen of the complexes. Orhan Gazi was a religious ruler. He was a smart commander as well; in fact, he was such a brave commander that he used to ride his horse and lead his army from the very front ranks. He fulfilled his father’s will by always being among the people and for the people.

Famous for his unassuming character, Orhan Gazi was recommended by his brother Alaaddin Ali as his father’s successor to the throne. The Ottoman sources show that he did not seek but accepted the throne only upon his brother’s insistence to do so. The traveler **Ibn Battuta**, who met with Orhan Gazi in Bursa, regarded him as “**the grandest of all Turcoman sultans**” and recorded that he was always out there making conquests, spending no more than a month where he went.<sup>943</sup>

### ▪ ***Sultan Bayazid I (r. 1389-1402 AD)***

The Title of *Yıldırım* or ‘thunderbolt’ was given to him for the bravery he displayed at the battle of Frenkiyazisi against the Karmanids in 1386. He was extremely brave, venturesome and skilful at using weapons and horse-

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<sup>942</sup> ibid, p. 8.

<sup>943</sup> ibid, p. 15-16.

riding. He also was a smart and efficient commander who played a major part in to win the First Battle of Kosovo (1389). He had been the first Turkish sultan to besiege Istanbul which he failed to conquer in spite of four different attempts. Anyhow, he gave a fatal blow to the crusaders in front of Nicopole fort on Sep 25, 1396 and took Vidin on the southern bank of Danube from the Bulgarians and refocused on blockading Istanbul. Throughout his life, Sultan Bayazid remained in constant warfare in the name of God. He also had to remain involved against different Muslim principalities in Anatolia.

Besides the above, Bayezid also seized Malyata in the east from the Mamluks which created animosity with them. The said expedition turned Mamluks from his friends to his foes. Taking advantage of the said mistake **Amir Timur attacked Anatolia with an Army six times greater than the Army of Sultan Bayezid.** Sultan's Army stood crushed and he was captured by Amir Timur near Ankara. Just seven months after his imprisonment, the Sultan passed away under mental anguish and humiliation at the hands of Timur. The death and destruction of the army of Bayezid caused great reverses to Islamic advances in Europe besides being a God-given gift for the western Christendom. Bayezid had undoubtedly been a great hero of the Ottoman Dynasty but he miserably failed to achieve his ends merely due to his bad luck. About him, it has been reported that:

Sultan Bayezid spent almost all his life on the battlefields and in combats. He was an extremely brave, active, and successful commander and a righteous ruler. He had a brazen character; in particular, he did not recoil from severely punishing those who had received bribery and committed injustices.

Bayezid was tall, fair-skinned and hook-nosed with a thick mustache. His round lower chin was circled by his beard, which was lighter in color than his mustache; his voice was rotund. His frowning brows and big black eyes were said to be his weapons, strong enough to consternate his enemies at

sight.<sup>944</sup>

In the course of his reign, Bayezid constructed numerous dervish lodges, medreses, almshouses, and travelers' and medical hospices, as well as Ulu Camii (the Grand Mosque) in Bursa in 1400, which is, simply put, a prestigious exhibition of a distinct Ottoman calligraphy. A wide array of these charitable constructions still remain in most of the cities across Anatolia and Rumelia. The Anatolian Fortress, also known as Guzelhisar, is also one of his heritages, which was particularly used during the siege of Istanbul between 1396-1397.

Sultan Bayezid I also had initiated the later tradition of the annual procession (surre alayi) to meet the needs of the Haramayn, the combined name of the blessed cities of Mecca and Medina, and to pay the salaries of the officials there. Bayezid sent the first procession from Edirne in 1389. The processions with the Caravan of imperial gifts for the Haramayn would continue until the reign of Mehmed Vahdeddin, the last Ottoman sultan, as a sign of the Ottomans' attachment to the Prophet's legacy.<sup>945</sup>

#### ▪ ***Sultan Mehmed I (r. 1413-1421)***

The sultanate of Bayezid stood divided into many factions ruled by his own sons and different others. The interregnum period of about 10 years was spent before Sultan Mehmed could reestablish his monarchy over Anatolia as well as Balkans which had been divided among different principalities after the death of Sultan Bayazid. About Mehmed, it has been stated that:

Mehmed Celebi saved the Ottoman Empire from disintegration once again; therefore, **he is regarded as a second founder of the Ottoman imperial state**. During the period of his reign, his priority lay in recovering Ottoman Anatolia and Rumelia from the Traumatic effects of the Battle of Ankara. Successfully he fortified his empire back to a sovereign power in the region despite a cumulative of opposing efforts in Anatolia and Rumelia. Mehmed Celebi knew well how to control his anger, and had the character of a calm, serious, and determined person, qualities that gave confidence to his statesmen and army. He was very good at using weapons and bold enough to fight in the front lines. **The chronicles narrate that he had more than forty concrete wounds on his body as a reminder of twenty-four major battles he fought in.** Mehmed Celebi was philanthropist: he

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<sup>944</sup> ibid, p. 34.

<sup>945</sup> ibid, p. 34-35.

undertook vast building projects in Bursa, including mosques, medreses, almshouses, and his own tomb. In addition, the Eskicami (the Old Mosque) constructed in Edirne and the Yesil (Green) Mosque in Bursa were completed during his reign. He treated his subjects, Muslims and Non-Muslims, fairly.

Mehmed Celebi, a wrestling-lover stalwart with a large chest, was strong enough to strike a bow with a string with his bare hands. He had a relieving face, thin and long frowning brows with dark hazel eyes, and he was hook-nosed. His chin was balanced, and his hands were muscular and strong.

He preferred to wear a high-collared caftan made from shiny textures and with fur on the inside. His sarik, the long single-piece turban wound around an inner headgear, was made from plain joint cloth. And it went with his gold-embroidered Kavuk, or quilted headgear.

Mehmed Celebi followed the tradition of the Surre procession, which began with his father, and sent the caravans of imperial donations in cash and kind to the Haramayn.<sup>946</sup>

- **Sultan Murad II (r. 1421-1444 and 1446-1451)**

Sultan Murad II (1421-1451) had risen to the throne at the **age of 17 years**. He was so famous for his charity works that people know him as *Ebl'-Hayrat* (the father of charity works). Initially he had to settle some feuds and rebellions within his own territory. Subsequently, he conquered many lands. The Wikipedia describes that:

Murad II then declared war against Venice, the Karamanid Emirate, Serbia and Hungary. The Karamanids were defeated in 1428 and Venice withdrew in 1432 following the defeat at the second Siege of Thessalonica in 1430. In the 1430s Murad captured vast territories in the Balkans and succeeded in annexing Serbia in 1439. **In 1441 the Holy Roman Empire and Poland joined the Serbian-Hungarian coalition. Murad II won the Battle of Varna in 1444 against János Hunyadi.**

Murad II relinquished his throne in 1444 to his son Mehmed II, but a Janissary revolt in the Empire forced him to return.

**In 1448 he defeated the Christian coalition at the Second Battle of Kosovo (the first one took place in 1389).** When the Balkan front was secured, **Murad II turned east to defeat Timur's son, Shah Rokh, and the**

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<sup>946</sup> ibid, p. 44-45.

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**emirates of Karamanid and Çorum-Amasya.** In 1450 Murad II led his army into Albania and unsuccessfully besieged the Castle of Kruje in an effort to defeat the resistance led by Skanderbeg. In the winter of 1450–1451, Murad II fell ill, and died in Edirne. He was succeeded by his son Mehmed II (1451–81).<sup>947</sup>

Although the Wikipedia has reported that: '*Murad II relinquished his throne in 1444 to his son Mehmed II, but a Janissary revolt in the Empire forced him to return*' but we cannot endorse the opinion shown therein. In fact, being a pious man, Sultan Murad was fed up from bloodshed in the war which had also taken the life of his son Alaadin. He, therefore, approached the Hungarians for peace. The two parties signed the Edirne-Segedin in 1444 which contained the condition of a perpetual peace for ten years. Sultan Murad, therefore, abdicated the throne in favor of his 13 years old son Mehmed II (the conqueror) to devote entirely to the worship of God. Murad was the first Sultan to give up the throne at will. The abdication of the Sultan was taken as a great opportunity by the pope, the kings and all other rulers in the Christendom to defeat the teenager successor of Sultan Murad. **All the religious leaders and the generals in the Western Christendom, therefore, were at one to commit breach of trust and to violate the treaty signed by them.** The urgency, therefore, compelled Sultan Murad to rise again to the occasion. He took the command in his hand and repelled the faithless Christians. The story has already been stated under 'Violation of Treaty' in the life sketch of Hunyady.

Murad had been an extremely pious and brave Sultan of the Turks. He had recovered almost all lands lost to Amir Temur during the thunder storm of Angora. After accepting a heavy tribute from the emperor at Constantinople, he left possession of Thessalonica and some forts of Thrace and Thessaly with him only to retire from the warfare and to devote himself entirely to the worship of the Lord. His early teenager successor (Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror of 13 years) might not have initiated any further assault on the European lands

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<sup>947</sup> Wikipedia, s.v.'Murad II'.

yet the Christians themselves did not allow the Turks to live in peace. It has, therefore, been reported that:

The Christian States were again in arms, and they had found a leader whose name is famous in the front rank of European generals. So long as Stephen Lazarevich lived, the treaty which bound Serbia to alliance with the Turks was faithfully observed; but on his death in 1427 a new king arose, George Brankovich, who knew not Murad, and who began to collect the forces of Serbia, Bosnia, Hungary, Poland, Wallachia, and Albania, against the common enemy.<sup>948</sup>

Mr. Salih Gulen has recorded that:

(...) The ottoman domain spanned from Macedonia to the Adriatic and as far as the eastern and western shores of the Aegean. This expansion completely disconcerted the Venetians, the major naval power in the region. The very fact that the Venetians held a strong naval power and a greater part of the Aegean islands had been under their possession pointed to a possibility that the Venetians could detach the Ottoman connections between Anatolia and Rumelia – the Ottoman lands in Europe.

Sultan Murad II positioned his entire army on the Rumelian side: **in 1430, he occupied Salonica**, the strategically vital Macedonian port city, and took it back from the Venetians, to whom Byzantium had formerly given the city. The following year, the conquests of Ioannina and Serres in the Northern Greece provided the Ottomans with a solid grip of the Southern Albania.<sup>949</sup>

Besides the crusaders, the Albanian Iskandar Bey had been another source of trouble for Sultan Murad. Iskandar Bey had been brought up under the ottoman administration rising to the position of a Bey in Anatolia. He not only became an apostate but also escaped the battlefield during the war against the Hungarians and continued his revolt for a long time. Throughout his life, he proved to be a time server changing his religions and fidelity in accordance with his needs. After serving the Ottoman Empire in 1423–43, he led a rebellion against them in Albania. He also joined the Republic of Venice from 1443 to 1447, and lastly the Kingdom of Naples until his death.

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<sup>948</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 59.

<sup>949</sup> Salih Gulen, *The Ottoman Sultans*, p. 51-52.

**▪ Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror**

Sultan Murad had died at the age of 48 years in 1451 at Edirne. He had abdicated in favor of his son Mehmed thrice. Sultan Mehmed was yet 13 years old when Sultan Murad retired to solitude at bursa in 1444 to concentrate on prayer and worship of the Lord handing over the charge of the Empire to him. Sultan Mehmed was physically present in the Ottoman capital Edirne when his father signed the peace treaty with the Hungarian king, the Serbian despot and the ambassadors of the Walachian prince.

After the retirement of Sultan Murad, the Christian pope, kings and others collectively decided to take advantage of the teenage of Sultan Mehmed by violating the ten years' treaty of peace made with his father. As such, from the very beginning, Sultan Mehmed II had a bitter taste of the western Christendom especially about their treacherous behavior with him. It was for the succor of the sultanate that Sultan Murad had to return to fight the Christendom under the joint command of Hunyadi the so called bravest general of the west at the battle of Varna. **After giving a crushing defeat to the crusaders and settling certain other affairs**, the Sultan again returned to his life of prayer and devotion to the Lord. Finally, sultan Murad's death at Edirne made Sultan Mehmed II the permanent successor to the throne on Feb 18, 1451 when he was only 19 years old.

Sultan Mehmed II was the ruler whose conquest of Istanbul was such a great event that brought end not only to the eastern Roman Empire but also to the Middle Ages to begin modern era in the West. The great conqueror was an extremely sagacious leader, fighter, scholar, poet and administrator that we find no match with him anywhere in the world. Christian writers like Stanley Lane Poole and Gibbon, however, had developed special dislike for him due to his great achievements against the Christendom. Instead of appreciating his achievements on merit, they tried to undermine the career of Sultan Mehmed II by bitterly criticizing him. An excerpt from Stanley Lane Poole may suffice to show his disposition towards the great conqueror:

Cruel, perfidious, and sensual, the new Sultan was yet, as is not uncommon with Eastern tyrants<sup>950</sup>, a very cultivated man, devoted to the making of verse and the society of men of learning. Thirty Ottoman poets received pensions from this Turkish Maecenas, and he even sent handsome presents every year to the Indian Khoja-i-jihan and the Persian Jam!; while his liberality towards colleges and pious foundations was so great that he was given the surname "**Father of Good Works**" as well as "**Sire of Victory**." His bounty and poetic talent were emulated by his great officers; and Mahmud Pasha, the conqueror of Negro-pont, was a founder of colleges and a writer of verse.<sup>951</sup>

Stanley Lane Poole also had gone a long way to prove cruelties of Sultan Mehmet II when after the siege of the city for 53 days he entered into Constantinople. His lamentations include the miserable conditions of the Christian people in the church of St. Sophia.

While they expected the descent of the tardy angel the doors were broken with axes, and, as the Turks encountered no resistance, there bloodless hands were employed in selecting and securing the multitude of their prisoners. Youth, beauty, the appearance of wealth, attracted their choice; and the right of property was decided among them by a prior seizure, by personal strength, and by the authority of command in the space of an hour. Male captives were bound with cords, the females with their veils and girdles; the prelates with the porters of the church; and young men of a plebeian class with noble maids, whose faces had been invisible to the sun and their nearest kindred, and in this common captivity the ranks of society were confounded, the ties of nature were cut asunder, and the inexorable soldier was careless of the father's groans, the tears of the mothers, and the lamentations of the children. The loudest in their wailings were the nuns, who were torn from the altar, with naked bosoms outstretched hands, and disheveled hair; and we should piously believe that few could be tempted to prefer the vigils of the harem to those of the monastery. Of these

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<sup>950</sup> Lane Poole's description of the Sultan as Cruel, perfidious, and sensual like Eastern tyrants, degrades his own position among the historians. Does he mean to say that the angels had been ruling in the West who were neither the tyrants nor cruel, perfidious or sensuous? He could produce no example of any angelic person among the European emperors or the kings who was more pious or humane than Sultan Mehmed II.

<sup>951</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Turkey*, p. 69-70.

unfortunate Greeks, of these domestic animals, whose strings were rudely driven, through the streets; and, as the conqueror was eager to return for more prey, their trembling pace was quickened with menaces and blows. At the same hour a similar rapine was exercised in all the churches and monasteries, in all the palaces and habitations of the capital; nor could any place, however, sacred or sequestered, protect the persons or the property of the Greeks. Above 60,000 of the devoted people were transported from the city to the camp or the fleet: exchanged or sold, according to the interest or caprice of their masters, and dispersed in remote servitude through the provinces of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>952</sup>

Mr. Lane Poole copied the above passage from Mr. Gibbon's '*The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*' Vol. 12, 1839, p. 227-228. Similar remarks based on the work of Von Hammer were given by E. S. Creasy in his 1854 '*History of the Ottoman Turks*' London. All these writers were not only biased against Sultan Muhammad but also against Islam. It was, therefore, natural for them to exaggerate the facts to produce a perverted picture of the great conqueror among the Muslims. In spite of all their vileness, they could not show any depravity or inhumanity committed by the Muslims at Constantinople, Jerusalem or other cities as has been recorded about the Christian hordes at the cities conquered by them. No Christian conqueror throughout the history of Christianity could ever prove to be more kind or magnanimous with the vanquished people than sultan Muhammad II or other heroes of Islam till today.

Mr. Gibbon and Lane Poole had intentionally concealed the bestialities, the arsonage, rapine, mass massacre, humiliation, cannibalism and thousands of inhumanities committed by the Christians during the conquest of Antioch and Marrah (1097-1098) and Jerusalem (1099). For short reference please go through our chapter '*the Crusaders at Jerusalem*'. As a historian, Lane Poole was expected to see through the plain glasses to evaluate the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed II. Due to his grudge against the Ottomans, he forgot all barbarities, bestialities, plunder and killing of helpless

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<sup>952</sup> ibid, p. 85-86.

women as well as children by the crusaders at many cities in the Christian Europe and Asia irrespective of the faith, age, sex and any offense of the victims. Besides ignoring the worst crimes of Hunyady, Lane Poole also forgot the sack of Constantinople at the hands of the crusaders in 1203. In spite of all this, Gibbon, Lane Poole and Creasy could produce no instances of mass murder, arsonage, humiliation, or sexual violence of the Christian women and children at the hands of the Muslim conquerors at Constantinople or elsewhere during the crusades.

Failing to trace out Sultan's treaty at the time of the conquest of Constantinople, the present writer shall be taking advantage of the Adhana of Sultan Muhammad for the **Franciscan Christians in Fojneca, Bosnia** showing his usual spirit of toleration and magnanimity. The imperial decree is preserved till date in the old Franciscan convent in which the conqueror proclaimed:

I, Sultan Mehmed Khan,  
hereby declare to the whole world that,  
the ones who possess this imperial decree, the Bosnian  
Franciscans, are under my protection. And I command that:

No one shall disturb or give harm to these people and their churches! They shall live in peace in my state. These people who have become emigrants shall have security and liberty. They may return to their monasteries located in the borders of my state. No one from my royal highness or my viziers or clerks, or my servants, or any of the citizens of my state shall disturb, insult or give any harm to the lives, properties, and churches of these people! and anybody they bring from abroad into my country will have the same rights.

By declaring this decree, I hereby take my great oath in the name of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, in the name of God's Messenger Muhammad and 124,000 former Prophets, and in the name of sword I gird that nobody shall do contrary to what has been written in this decree!<sup>953</sup>

The sultan had been a great scholar and a master of poetry. Besides great diplomatic skills, he ranks higher than the greatest generals in the secular history of the

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<sup>953</sup> Salih Gulen, *The Ottoman Sultans*, tr. by Emrah Shahin, (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2012), p. 66.

world. He proved himself a far sighted planner during the conquest of Istanbul which turned out to be the capital of a great civilization. Sultan Mehmed gave tremendous priority to education and administration of justice within his domain. He ordered the initial reconstruction of the Topcapi palace the official and primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans in Istanbul for 4 out of their 6 century long reign. He also constructed Fateh Mosque and numerous Medreses in his realm. **So much attention was given to reconstruction and facilities at Istanbul that within a hundred years, it became the largest city in the world.** A lot more can be found in the historical records to appreciate the valor, the strength, sagaciousness, generosity and the concern of the Sultan for welfare of all citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Crowning all this, the great sultan had been a devout Muslim and a humble servant of the Almighty. It was due to the ethical excellence of Islam and Muslim tolerance of other religions that millions of Jews as well as the Christians continued to live in peace and prosperity within the Ottoman Empire spreading over three continents in the world.

Almost all the historical books contain elaborate details of the conquest of Istanbul and other great achievements of Sultan Mehmed II. We, therefore, need not overburden the book with detailed description about him. It is, however, worth mentioning that after a reign of 30 years, the Sultan died on May 3, 1481 near Maltepe on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. Chronicles narrate **that he was either poisoned by a Venetian doctor on his way to Rome or fell dead as a result of gout he suffered from.**<sup>954</sup> Billions and billions of the blessings of the Lord be on him for his virtues of devotion to the Lord and great services for the welfare of each and every citizen within the territories ruled by him.

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<sup>954</sup> ibid, p. 72.

## CONTRAST OF CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

To have a better understanding of human values i.e. human rights especially pertaining to the slaves, we need to know the historical background, the foundations of faith, values accorded to moral or material aspects of life and the sources of guidance of different societies in the world. As regards the people of the book, they were obliged to abide by the divine commandments contained in their scriptures. Among them, only a minority adhered to the limits set by the Lord while majority of the people diverged from the divine commandments to pursue their own interests. Although both the Jews and the Christians had been the precursors in faith of the revealed religions but unluckily none of those factions stuck to the guidance provided in their scriptures. Personal interests, temporal gains and needs of the time drove them away from the scriptural instructions for their conduct on earth. One of the most conspicuous examples of deviations had been that the Christian expeditionary forces forsook the original motive of the crusades. Different kings, knights and the priests utilized people under their command to settle such issues that conflicted with the liberation of the Holy Land and the Sepulchre of Jesus at Jerusalem.

### Diverse Nature of Crusades

The original motive of the crusades was liberation of the Holy Land from the so-called infidels who were occupying Jerusalem and other holy places for about 460 years since 636 AD. Besides this, the Muslims had also snatched Egypt, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria and some other lands from the Roman Empire. Vast propaganda was, therefore, made about the Muslims for conquering the lands under the Roman Empire. In addition to the

same false accusations of cruelties against the Christian pilgrims and desecration of holy sites in Jerusalem were also spread against the Muslims. In response to the call of the Pope and the clergy to march towards the East, to recover all the lands lost the Muslims and to reoccupy Jerusalem almost entire Europe stood up in arms against the Muslim East. Different expeditions consisting of the chivalrous knights, kings and the common soldiers set out towards the east to liberate Jerusalem and other lands formerly occupied by the Romans. The crusaders, however, neither had a united command nor had they a well-planned common goal before them. In spite of the fact that they initially succeeded to capture many Muslim cities including Jerusalem up to 1099 AD yet they could neither establish the kingdom of God there nor a government providing peace, security, justice or other benefits to their subjects. During the course of the expeditions prolonging over 400 years thereafter, they miserably failed to show any better administration of justice, peace and prosperity in the lands conquered by them. Their failure to assert moral excellence of Christianity over Islam had, therefore, created dismay in the western Christians as well as in the people subjugated by them.

Right from 1095 AD, different waves of the crusaders had been taking diversion from the main motive of crushing the Muslim powers in the East and to reestablish the Christian kingdom in Asia as discussed earlier. In the absence of a common purpose and united command, different Christian expeditions had taken wrong directions due to which they destroyed mostly the Christian lands and people even before entering Asia or the Holy Land. Christ was the ideal figure represented as preacher of love, peace, mercy and humaneness to his followers. Even the laymen among the crusaders had sacrificed their pursuits, peace, property, and everything else only to eliminate the much propagated barbarity and the vices of the infidel Muslims with far superior ethical excellence of the Christian faith and practice. Such propagation had been the driving forces behind the

mass movements towards the Holy Land but the dream could never be realized anywhere on earth.

Ground facts, however, turned out to be different from the ideals propagated by the clergy and the pontiff. Instead of destroying Islam and recapturing the Holy Land, the Christian hosts avenged their wrath on their co-religionists and they spared neither the peasants nor the citizens including the priests and the bishops falling on their way. Many of the earlier expeditions, therefore, failed to achieve anything good. Their wrath fell on Christian communities in Europe and they did not spare the peasants or the citizens including the priests and the bishops who insisted that the crusaders must observe the rule of law while proceeding on the holy mission. There also had been many ramifications among the crusaders taking diversion from the primary purpose of the crusades. Among them were the following:

#### ▪ ***Crusades Against the Jews***

The crusading fanatics failed to form any disciplined army to fight under a single command to achieve their goals. The participants formed unruly mobs led by various chivalrous knights keen to display their power and prowess, to kill and to destroy. Unnecessary murder and rapine did not allow them to concentrate on reaching the Holy Land. Lack of any central command, therefore, left waves of the crusaders to pursue their own paths. Consequently they caused more loss to life and property of the Christians than the Muslims. One of the scholars, therefore, reports that:

Some sections of the great population mobilized for a crusade did not travel to the Holy Land, but carried out attacks against Jewish communities in France and Germany. The most serious slaughter was carried out by a 10,000-strong army commanded by Count Emicho of Leisingen, who claimed that **Christ had appeared to him and promised to make him emperor if he would convert the Jews of Europe.** (...) For most people in Europe, life was harsh. Some may have seen

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the crusade as a chance for a new beginning.<sup>955</sup>

The utter failure of the crusaders from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century had caused such a frustration in them that they always looked for some opportunity to punish the Muslims or the Jews on one accusation or another wherever it was possible for them. Armstrong records that:

The Jews enriched the towns on the banks of the Moselle and of the Rhine and communicated to France and Germany the products of each respective country. The city of Cologne was the first city which was stained with their blood. The sanctity of the archiepiscopal palace at Mayence the sacred presence of the venerable metropolitan, could not shield seven hundred of the children of Israel from the swords of men, who professed a religion of mercy and love. The bishop of Spires bravely and successfully defended the Jews in his city, but the generosity of the bishops of Treves and Worms was not equally pure and meritorious, if it be true that they compelled the objects of their protection to change their religion. Many firm and noble spirits disdained apostacy. Some of them retired to a chamber of the bishop at Worms, on pretence of deliberating on the renunciation of their faith. Deliberation produced virtue, and by self-slaughter they disappointed the cruelty of their enemies. More appalling spectacles were witnessed at Treves. **Mothers plunged the dagger into the breasts of their own children; fathers and sons destroyed each other, and women threw themselves into the Moselle.**<sup>956</sup>

Mark Gregory Pegg writes that "The Albigensian Crusade ushered genocide into the West **by linking divine salvation to mass murder, by making slaughter as loving an act as His sacrifice on the cross**".

During the Black Death which struck Europe in 1348 AD people instinctively turned against the Jews and blamed them for this catastrophe. (...) Killing Jews seemed to be the only way that they could cope with their fear and grief. **By the end of 1349 there were hardly any Jews left in Germany or the Low Countries.** The persecutions continued during the fifteenth century: one city after another found that it could not bear the presence of the Jews. Paul Johnson lists the shameful and constant expulsions and deportations of Jews "from Vienna and Linz in 1421, from Cologne in 1424, Augsburg in 1439, Bavaria in 1442 (and again in 1450) and from the

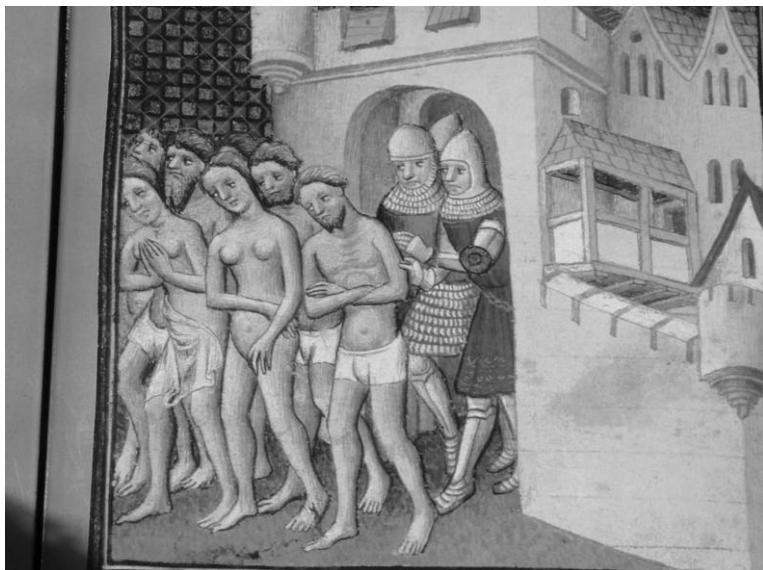
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<sup>955</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 47.

<sup>956</sup> Charles Mills, *History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, p. 76-77.

crown cities of Moravia in 1454. They were thrown out of Perugia in 1485, Vicenza in 1486, Parma in 1488, Milan and Lucca in 1489 ... and all Tuscany in 1494." The expulsion from Spain must be seen in the Context of this larger European trend.<sup>957</sup>

**In 1537 Luther had already had the Jews expelled from Lutheran cities** and they were also thrown out of Calvinist cities, even though Calvin sometimes spoke positively of Jews. It is significant that the Lutherans used this apparent appreciation of Judaism to discredit their Calvinist rivals and called them "Judaizers" associating them automatically with the "others".<sup>958</sup>



#### ▪ **Massacre of the Cathars**

Catharism (the pure) was a Christian dualist or Gnostic revival movement that thrived in some areas of Southern Europe, particularly northern Italy and southern France, between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. From the beginning of his reign, Pope Innocent III attempted to end Catharism by sending missionaries and by persuading the local authorities to act against

<sup>957</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War*, p. 461.

<sup>958</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War*, p. 469.

them. Pope Innocent III then launched the **Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229)**. There were many adherents in the city of Albi and the surrounding area in the 12th and 13th centuries. The entire population was slaughtered and the city burned to the ground. Contemporary sources give estimates of the number of **dead ranging between 15,000 and 20,000.**<sup>959</sup>

Charles Philips, while narrating massacre of the Cathars, has depicted stark naked men and women expelled by the crusaders from the **city of Carcassonne**. A caption explaining the picture on page 237 of his book 'Crusades' reads:

Naked and frightened, the Cathars were expelled from Carcassonne after the city fell to the crusader army in August 1209.<sup>960</sup>

After the fall of Carcassonne, the crusaders besieged the towns of Pierre Roger de Cabaret and Minerve. The Cathars were given the opportunity to convert to Catholicism. Most did. **The 140 who refused were burned at the stake.** In August the crusaders proceeded to the stronghold of Termes. In 1215, the crusaders entered Toulouse and ravaged the city.

#### ▪ ***The Inquisition***

The Inquisition was established in 1234 to uproot the remaining Cathars. Operating in the south at Toulouse, Albi, Carcassonne and other towns during the whole of the 13th century, and a great part of the 14th, it succeeded in crushing Catharism as a popular movement and driving its remaining adherents underground. Punishments for Cathars who refused to recant ranged from cross wearing and pilgrimage to imprisonment and burning.

The Cathar fortress of Montségur was besieged and on 16 March 1244, a large and symbolically important massacre took place, where **over 200 Cathar Perfects were burnt in an enormous pyre at the prat dels**

<sup>959</sup> Wikipedia, *Albigensian Crusade*.

<sup>960</sup> Charles Phillips, *Crusades and the Crusader Knights*, p. 237.

**cremats ("field of the burned") near the foot of the castle.**

Raphael Lemkin, well-known as the coiner of the term genocide, referred to the Albigensian Crusade as "one of the most conclusive cases of genocide in religious history".

**▪ Dissenting Factions**

The historical records show that after 1272 AD, the Christian West started applying the term crusades to much broader spectra of action which did not confine to Europe and Asia nor to any particular religion in the world. Crusades during this period had also been directed towards the dissenting factions among the Christians and especially against those who did not acknowledge Roman Catholicism and refused to bow before the politico-religious authority of the Pope at Rome. Crusades, against the Cathars, Anti-Hussite crusade i.e. against followers of John Huss, Crusade to Mahdia (1390), Crusades of Boucicaut (1403), **Crusade against Ottoman Murad II (1443)**, Crusades in the Baltic against Pagans, in southern France and Bohemia against heretic Christians and in Italy against enemies of the papacy are the instances of the other fields of action under new title given to each of the Crusades.

The history of crusades, therefore, fails to provide us any uniformity in the culture, civilization and the purpose of the crusaders. The crusaders were, however, wonderstruck to find much advanced civilization, culture and learning in the Muslim East in the Asian parts adjoining the parts of eastern Europe.

## **Islamic Culture and Civilization**

The most prominent difference between the Islamic culture and civilization vis-à-vis the civilization and culture of the West was that Islam believed in universal brotherhood of all descendants of Adam and Eve on earth. Islam preached equality of rights and privileges for all human beings irrespective of their color, faith,

race or region. They were bound by the verdict of the Almighty that ان اکرمکم عند الله انتکم i.e. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you (49:13). The Lord also had defined the term انتکم (The most righteous of you) by another commandment i.e. اعدلوا هواقرب للنحوی (Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious). Justice, therefore, is one of the primary foundations of God-consciousness or faith. The Almighty further binds the believers by the commandment that:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition.<sup>961</sup>

Although the entire text of the Qur'ān and the Ahadith explain the boundaries of Islamic culture and civilization yet the verses quoted above summarily describe the crux of the matter. As compared to this, the western civilization was neither based on equity, justice and righteousness nor did they seem to fear about their accountability before the Almighty on the Day of Judgment. The principle quoted above, therefore, differentiates them from the civilization and culture of Islam.

In spite of various shortcomings in their practice the Muslims had been confessing the supremacy of the Almighty and His law in the heavens and on earth. Islam did not profess divine rights of the kings nor did it believe in the precept of the authority of the majority. The kings as well as individuals were bound by the law of the Lord believing strictly in their accountability before Him. Universal brotherhood and equality of the rights of all human beings on earth had been the divinely enjoined precepts to be followed by all the believers in Islam. The net result of the same was that the Muslims never believed in oppressing or exploiting the others nations. They always had the desire to preach Islam and to expand profitable trade in the world than to plunder others or to enrich themselves by usurpation of

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<sup>961</sup> Al-Qur'ān 16:90 Yusuf Ali.

the rights of others. Instead of colonizing different lands, the culture as well as minds of the people, Islam's main stress had been to preach faith to others politely to eliminate evil and to establish justice on the land. No attempt had ever been made to spread Islamic imperialism in the world. Except for granting political independence, the Muslims had been treating the vanquished people like their own brethren enjoying all basic human rights with liberties of faith, business, trade and professions.

Although we shall be discussing voyages of discovery, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, slavery, debt servitude, political dominance and corporate globalization agenda of USA and other imperial powers in the next volume of the book yet for a comparative study of the difference between the Islamic practice and the aims and objects of the imperialism, we shall be quoting two examples to highlight the contrast between the imperial thinking of the European powers as against the Muslim open-mindedness and benevolent attitude towards their subjects in the following:

The colonial powers or the western imperialism always aimed at plundering the entire human and the natural resources of the lands subjugated by them. Their developments in science, industry architecture, the most destructive and explosive devices depended on putting ban on all sources of learning, sciences and technology, a tight control on their productive capabilities, controlling the trades and industries only to promote industries, exports, trades and other benefits of the rulers. A short reference pertaining to the British rule in India is being quoted in the following:

To be sure, economic historians remind us that in fact Asia had been the predominant producer of world's total GNP for some eighteen centuries. **As late as the year 1800, Asia accounted for about 60% of the world's total GNP, in contrast to Europe's 30%. India's share alone of the global product in 1750 amounted to 25%** (according to Jaswant Singh, former Indian finance minister), much like that of the United States today. But during the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries, with the intrusion of European imperialism backed by Europe's surging industrial innovation and financial sophistication, Asia's global share declined precipitously. **By 1900, for example, under prolonged British imperial rule, India's share shrank to a mere 1.6%.**<sup>962</sup>

From another source, we reproduce the comparative figures to show the steadily declining effect of colonization on the world manufacturing outputs on the Asian nations as compared to the Western Colonizers during 1750-1900 AD.

### **Relative Shares of World Manufacturing Output, 1750-1900.**<sup>963</sup>

	<b>1750</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>1880</b>	<b>1900</b>
United Kingdom (Britain)	1.9	4.3	6.5	19.9	22.9	18.5
France	4.0	4.2	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.8
German States/Germany	2.9	3.5	3.5	4.9	8.5	13.2
Russia	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	8.8
United States	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2
India/Pakistan	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7

This shows that while manufacturing products and trade from Asiatic countries especially China and India had been strangulated by the colonizers to such an extant that the greatest producers of year 1750 were at the bottom of the list of manufacturers and exporters by 1900 AD. The colonizers like UK France, Germany, US and Japan touched top of the list. We have no time to go into details how this miracle was performed which brought the UK from the low position of 1.9 of the world produce to 18.5% while USA's share rose from 0.1 % to 23.6 % during the same period yet we have no doubt that the conquerors had eliminated almost entire industries in their colonies through well planned and thoroughly organized program. The example of USA is unique in this respect while being colonies of different countries in 1750, their share in manufactured outputs

<sup>962</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision*, (New York: Basic Books, 2012), p. 15.

<sup>963</sup> Larry S. Krieger & others, *World History, Perspectives on the Past* p. 550.

was merely 0.1% of the world manufactured output. USA attained independence in 1776 AD and within 124 years of their liberty, their share rose from 0.1 % to 23.6 % of the world manufacturing output. From almost 0% output during the colonial period, therefore, the US decolonization made them the greatest exporters in the world.

As against USA, India continued to be a colony up to 1947 AD when except for the means of communication i.e. rail, road, shipping and certain collages to teach English to the intermediaries between the English men and the local population, we could hardly find any progress in its industry or the products. The present writer while serving in UBL of Pakistan learnt in 1982 that an ordinary industrialist needed approval from 36 departments to set up an industry in Pakistan. The govt. control was so strict on the industries that the industrialist had to satisfy the income tax department about his sources to build the industry. The system was such that due to strict documentation for each and everything imported or purchased from the local producers, it was impossible for the industrialist to conceal even a hundred rupees of his investment. As compared to this, one was free to construct a house worth Rs. 50 million without declaring his sources of income to the income tax department. This meant that the govt. of Pakistan was strictly following the apathetic and hostile policy of the British to disallow or to close down the units already producing something for Pakistan. A detailed survey of the closed industries will reveal the true position to the nation. The story has many other despicable aspects which the present writer cannot bring to light. Anyhow, most of the Pakistanis are well aware of the fact that different governments in Pakistan always thwarted the attempts of the industrialists or other manufacturers only to please the suppliers from various countries in the world, conspicuous among them were the Britishers, the Japanese, the Germans the French and USA. For a complete decolonization, therefore, we will have to

promote and rely on indigenous talents, capital, local language, and increased facilities for the industrialists. Besides increased incentives to the exporters, we also will have to provide necessary amenities and facilities like sanitation, disposal of the refuse and facilities like good roads to the manufacturing sites. The government officers who are more sympathetic with their own bellies will have to be replaced with those who have the integrity and a strong desire to create a flourishing Pakistan for betterment of the nation.

Although the western nations leave no occasion to criticize the Muslims and especially the Moors in Spain yet the World history fails to produce any more judicious and friendly administration of foreign rulers over the globe as we find in Spain from 711 to 1492 i.e. extending over 787 years. Some passing remarks about the same are, therefore, given below:

## **The Moors in Spain**

THE history of Spain offers us a melancholy contrast. Twelve hundred years ago, Tarik the Moor added the land of the Visigoths to the long catalogue of kingdoms subdued by the Moslems. **For nearly eight centuries, under her Mohammedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened State.** Her fertile provinces, rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors, bore fruit an hundredfold. Cities innumerable sprang up in the rich valleys of the Guadelquivir and the Guadiana, whose names, and names only, still commemorate the vanished glories of their past.

**Art, literature, and science prospered, as they then prospered nowhere else in Europe.** Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science: women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study, and the lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and shipbuilding, the highest and most elaborate products of the 'loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by the Spanish Moors. **In the practice of war no less than in the arts of**

**peace they long stood supreme.** Their fleets disputed the command of the Mediterranean with the Fatimites, while their armies carried fire and sword through the Christian marches. The Cid himself, the national hero, long fought on the Moorish side, and in all save education was more than half a Moor. **Whatsoever makes a kingdom great and prosperous, whatsoever tends to refinement and civilization, was found in Moslem Spain.**<sup>964</sup>

In 1492 the last bulwark of the Moors gave way before the crusade of Ferdinand and Isabella, and with Granada fell all Spain's greatness. For a brief while, indeed, the reflection of the Moorish splendour cast a borrowed light upon the history of the land which it had once warmed with its sunny radiance. The great epoch of Isabella, Charles V., and Philip II., of Columbus, Cortes, and Pizarro, shed a last halo about the dying moments of a mighty State. Then followed the abomination of desolation, the rule of the Inquisition, and the blackness of darkness in which Spain has been plunged ever since. In the land where science was once supreme, the Spanish doctors became noted for nothing but their ignorance and incapacity, and the discoveries of Newton and Harvey were condemned as pernicious to the faith. Where once seventy public libraries had fed the minds of scholars, and half a million books had been gathered together at Cordova for the benefit of the world, such indifference to learning afterwards prevailed, that the new capital, Madrid, possessed no public library in the eighteenth century, and even the manuscripts of the Escorial were denied in our own days to the first scholarly historian of the Moors, though himself a Spaniard. The sixteen thousand looms of Seville soon dwindled to a fifth of their ancient number; the arts and industries of Toledo and Almeria faded into insignificance; the very baths public buildings of equal ornament and use were destroyed because cleanliness savoured too strongly of rank infidelity. The land, deprived of the skilful irrigation of the Moors, grew impoverished and neglected; the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted; most of the populous cities which had filled every district of Andalusia fell into ruinous decay; and beggars, friars, and bandits took the place of scholars, merchants, and knights. So low fell Spain when she had driven away the Moors. Such is the melancholy contrast offered by her history.<sup>965</sup>

<sup>964</sup> Stanley Lane Pool, *The Moors in Spain*, 'Preface', p. vii-viii.

<sup>965</sup> *ibid*, p. viii-ix.

Most of the western writers try to disparage Islam on one account or another. There had, however, been certain valiant lovers of truth among them. One of such figures we find in Robert Briffault who boldly upheld the truth in his observation about the Muslim rule in Spain and other parts of the world. He remarks that:

To the intellectual culture of Islam, which has been fraught with consequences of such moment, corresponded an ethical development no less notable in the influence which it has exercised. The fierce intolerance of Christian Europe was indeed more enraged than humiliated by the spectacle of the broad tolerance which made no distinction of creed and bestowed honour and position on Christian and Jew alike, and whose [principles are symbolized in the well-known analogue of the Three Rings popularized by Boccaccio and Lessing. It was, however, not without far-reaching influence on the more thoughtful minds of those who came in contact with Moorish civilization. But barbaric Europe confessed itself impressed and was stung to emulation by the lofty magnanimity and the ideals of chivalrous honour presented to it by the knights of Spain, by gentlemen like **the fierce soldier, Al-Mansur who claimed that, though he had slain many enemies in battle, he had never offered an insult to any an ideal of knightly demeanour and dignity which twentieth century England might with profit perpend.** The ruffianly Crusaders were shamed by the grandeur of conduct and generosity of Saladin and his chivalry. The ideal of knightly virtue was adopted, the tradition of noblesse oblige was established. Poetry and romances deeply tinged with Arabian ideas formed the only secular literature which circulated and appealed to popular imagination; and **a new conception of the place and dignity of woman passed into Europe through the courts of Provence from the Moorish world,** where she shared the intellectual interests and pleasures of man.<sup>966</sup>

There never was an 'age of chivalry.' Like the golden age it has only existed as a mirage dimly located in the vague distances of an imaginary past. Poetic imagination has associated it with the brutal and barbaric times of Charlemagne, or with the legendary figures of a King Arthur or a Parsifal. But the ideal of knighthood, of courtesy and honour was throughout the iniquities and abominations of feudal and tyrannic Europe the one source of substantial, concrete moral qualities. **That gran bonta de j cavalier i antichi forced by the sheer moral superiority of the**

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<sup>966</sup> Robert Briffault, *Making of Humanity*, p. 307-308.

**Moors upon the brigand nobility of Europe, became the sole redeeming ethical grace of Christendom; and the tradition has been handed down to our own day in the notion so dear to the English mind of a 'gentleman.' Thus, shocking as the paradox may be to our traditional notions, it would probably be only strict truth to say that Muhammadan culture has contributed at least as largely to the actual, practical, concrete morality of Europe as many a more sublimated ethical doctrine.**<sup>967</sup>

It was under the influence of the Arabian and Moorish revival of culture, and not in the fifteenth century, that the real Renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe. After steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when the cities of the Saracenic world, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, Toledo, were growing centers of civilization and intellectual activity. It was there that the new life arose which was to grow into a new phase of human evolution. From the time when the influence of their culture made itself felt, began the stirring of a new life.<sup>968</sup>

## Modern European Civilization

Civilization is usually defined as advancement in the civic and social patterns in the society. To have a better grasp of the concept we need to contrast civilization with sheer animality, bestiality, barbarism and wild instincts of the primitive societies. Commenting on modern European civilization, Robert Briffault observes that:

It is highly probable that **but for the Arabs modern European civilization would never have arisen at all**; it is absolutely certain that but for them, life would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution. For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme source of its victory natural science and the scientific spirit.<sup>969</sup>

What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new

<sup>967</sup> ibid, p. 308-309.

<sup>968</sup> ibid, p. 188-189.

<sup>969</sup> ibid, p. 190.

spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.<sup>970</sup>

With this, we come to the end of our first volume on Slavery and Human Rights from ancient to medieval periods. The next volume will be devoted to Slavery and Human Rights from Colonial to Post Colonial Periods.

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<sup>970</sup> *ibid*, p. 191.

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